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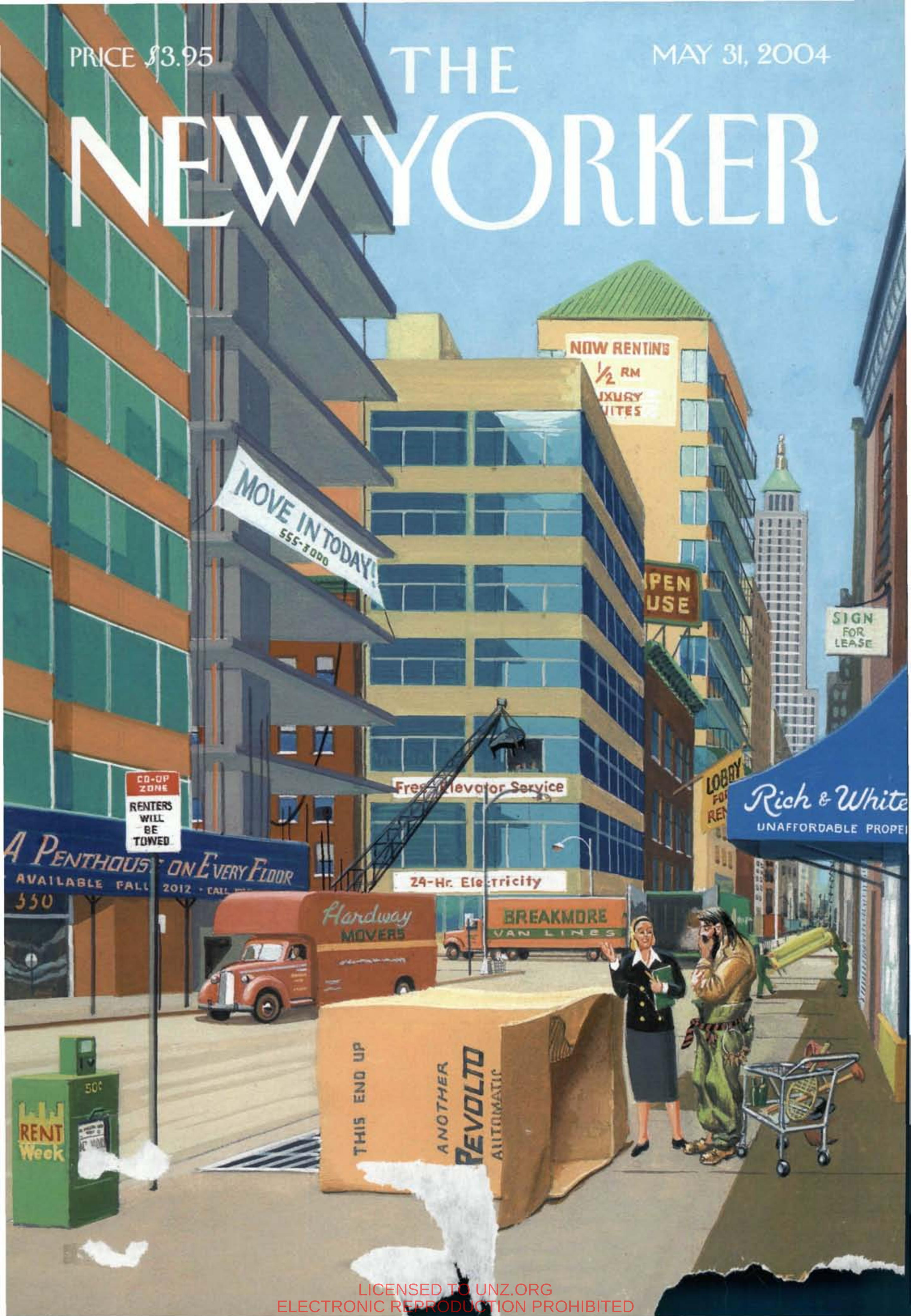
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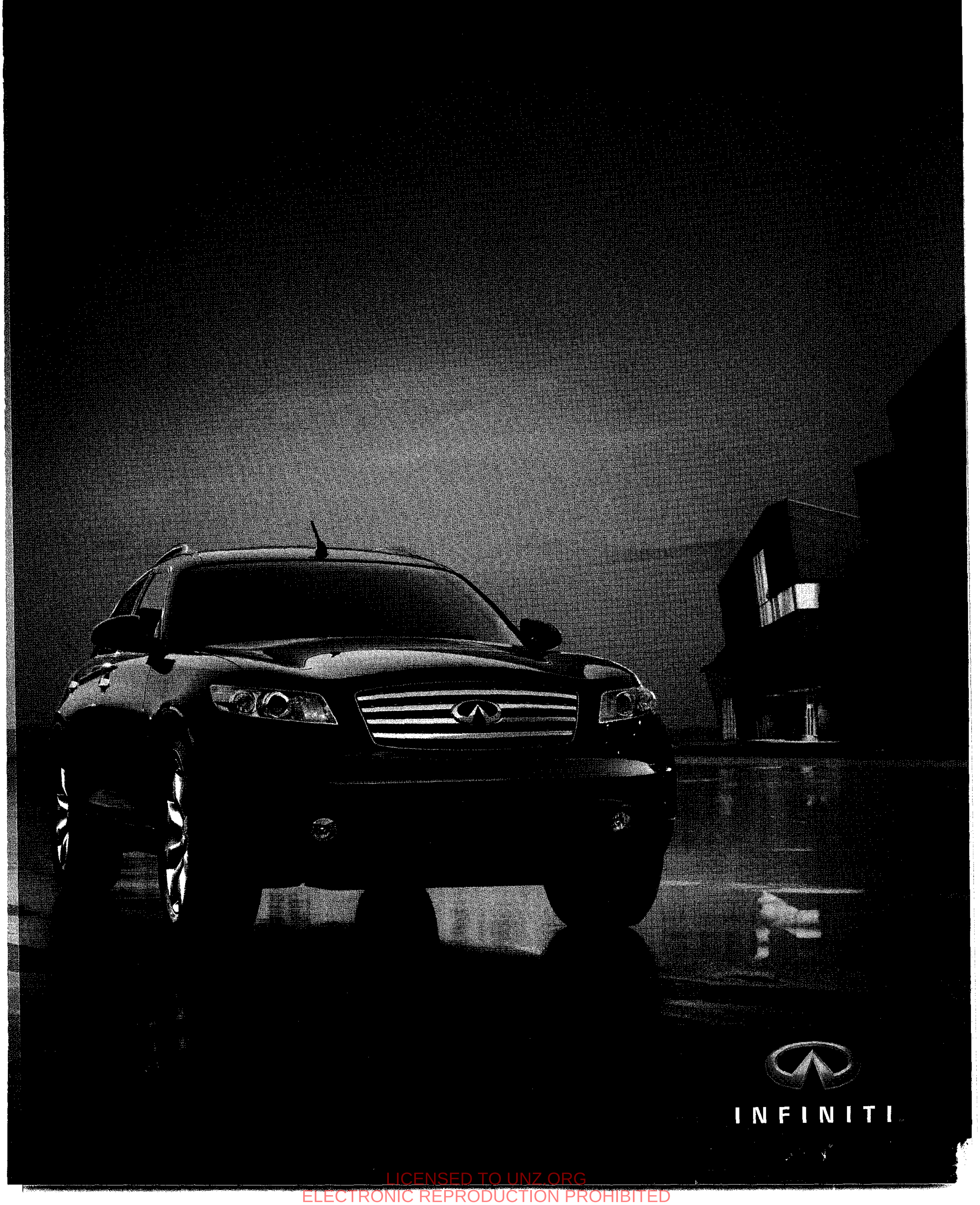

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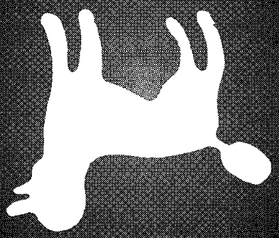

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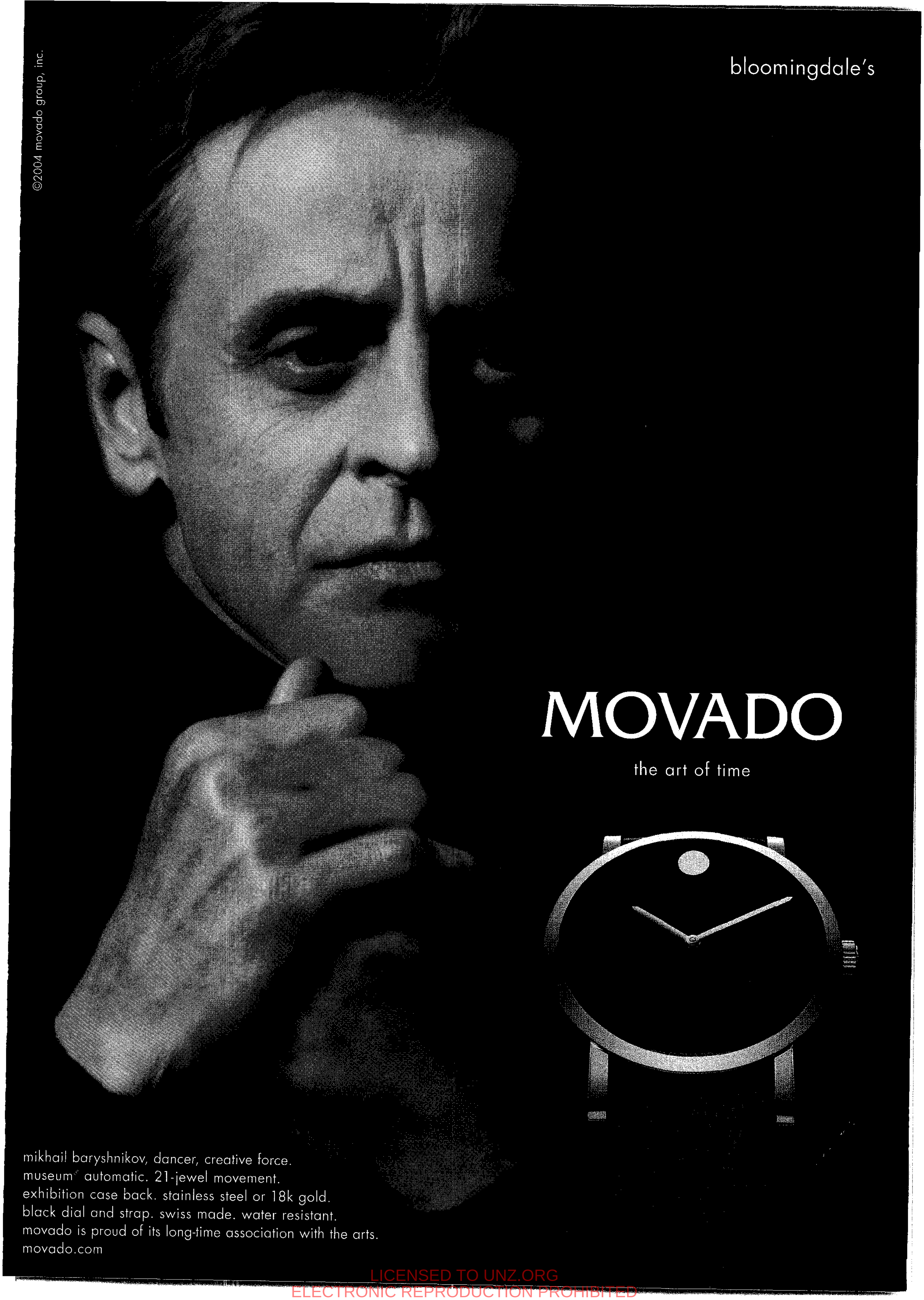
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CONTRIBUTORS

Jeffrey Goldberg ("Among the Settlers," p. 46) is a staff writer based in Washington. He is working on a book about his experiences in the Israeli Army and elsewhere in the Middle East, which will be published next year.

Elizabeth Kolbert (Comment, p. 27) is a political correspondent for the magazine. Her book "The Prophet of Love: And Other Tales of Power and Deceit" has just been published.

James Surowiecki (The Financial Page, p. 31) writes about business and finance for the magazine. His book "The Wisdom of Crowds" comes out this week.

Simon Schama ("Sail Away," p. 39), a professor of history and art history at Columbia, has been writing cultural essays for the magazine since 1995.

Kevin Conley (The Talk of the Town, p. 29) is a staff writer and the author of "Stud: Adventures in Breeding."

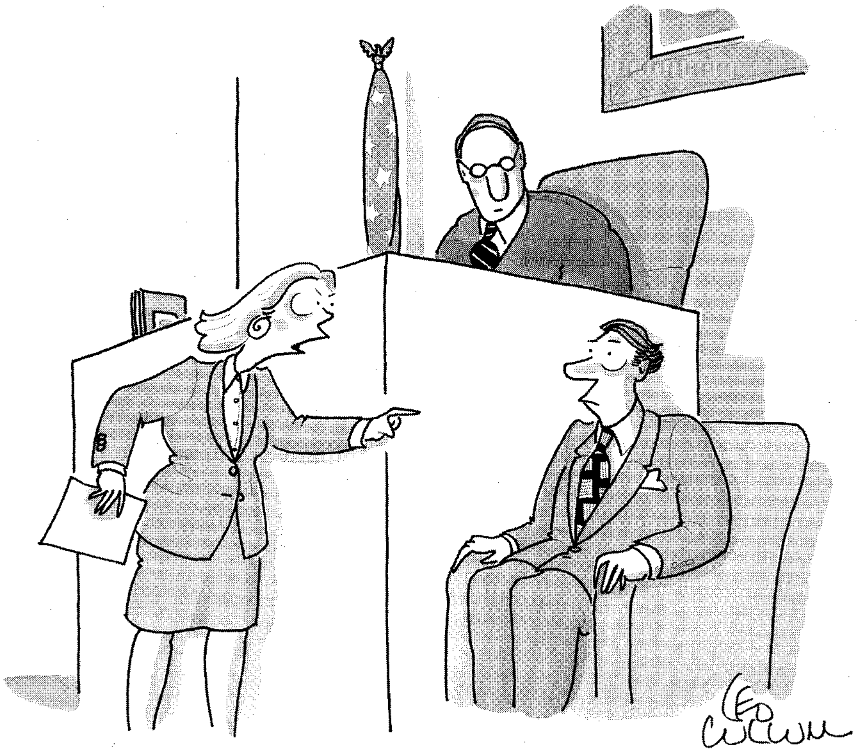
William Finnegan ("The Candidate," p. 32) has been writing for the magazine since 1984. He has written four books, including "Cold New World" and "A Complicated War."

Kathleen Jamie (Poem, p. 61) has published five collections of poems, the latest of which is "Mr. and Mrs. Scotland Are Dead."

David Means (Fiction, p. 70) is the author of three short-story collections, including "The Secret Goldfish," which will be published in the fall.

Adam Haslett (A Critic at Large, p. 76) is a recent graduate of Yale Law School. His book of stories "You Are Not a Stranger Here" was a finalist for a Pulitzer Prize and a National Book Award.

Gary Giddins (Jazz, p. 85), the author of "Visions of Jazz" and "Bing Crosby: A Pocketful of Dreams," has a new book, "Weather Bird," coming out in the fall. ♦



"Are you telling the court that because of the South Beach diet your pants fell down?"

THE MAIL

ENDS AND MEANS

Seymour Hersh's detailed account of the horrific behavior at Iraq's Abu Ghraib prison, and the United States' response, highlights the need to recognize torture and other cruel and abusive interrogation techniques as one and the same—which is why both are equally forbidden by international and U.S. law ("Torture at Abu Ghraib," May 10th; "Chain of Command," May 17th; and "The Gray Zone," May 24th). For more than fifteen years, Physicians for Human Rights has documented these practices throughout the world. Events at Abu Ghraib make it painfully clear that the U.S. must respect all of its legal obligations under the Geneva Conventions and the United Nations Convention Against Torture. Simply prosecuting a few offenders will not end such practices, nor will it earn the trust of those who believe in human dignity as the foundation of freedom, justice, and peace.

Vincent Iacopino, Director of Research
Physicians for Human Rights
Boston, Mass.

What really infuriates me about the story Hersh tells is that young soldiers are the only ones being dragged through the mud. Senior leaders (including the President) with years of experience are not taking responsibility for the blatant disregard of the Geneva Conventions through a special-access program meant only for intelligence operations. That the President can say in public that a few soldiers are to blame for this is a travesty. I'm also angered at the military leadership for not taking its share of the blame. I hold the President, as Commander-in-Chief, personally responsible for immoral decisions made by senior leaders, as well as for the actions of our soldiers. I believe that he has eroded respect for the United States around the world.

Captain Adrien Paquin, U.S. Army
Indianapolis, Ind.

Secret efforts to act quickly against terrorists are indeed important and necessary. I cannot, however, condone the abandonment of the Geneva Conventions described in Hersh's article. The consequences for the United States with regard to human rights, world opinion, and the treatment of American prisoners of war are far too adverse. And the end does not justify the means; we should be setting an example for the world.

Wayne Essel
Hartland, Conn.

One of Hersh's sources describes the guards at Abu Ghraib as "recycled hillbillies from Cumberland, Maryland"—exactly the types our military relies upon to fill its ranks and follow orders. That they alone should bear the brunt of world scrutiny is obscene. If America and the world are in need of someone to blame, they need look no further than Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and Under-Secretary Stephen Cambone. How can the Pentagon expect those of us in rural and middle America to encourage our children to serve in a military whose hierarchy abandons them?

Patrick Francis Joyce
Moosic, Pa.

One of the most upsetting notes in Hersh's "Chain of Command" was this: " 'He's not regarded as a hero in some circles in the Pentagon,' a retired Army major general said of Taguba. 'He's the guy who blew the whistle, and the Army will pay the price for his integrity. The leadership does not like to have people make bad news public.' " An officer like General Antonio Taguba, who discharges his duty as reflected in his report on Abu Ghraib, should be treasured by the Army. I hope that the public, Congress, and the press do their part to insure that he is not punished by those who failed to know or do their own duty.

Daniel Nelson
Beaufort, N.C.

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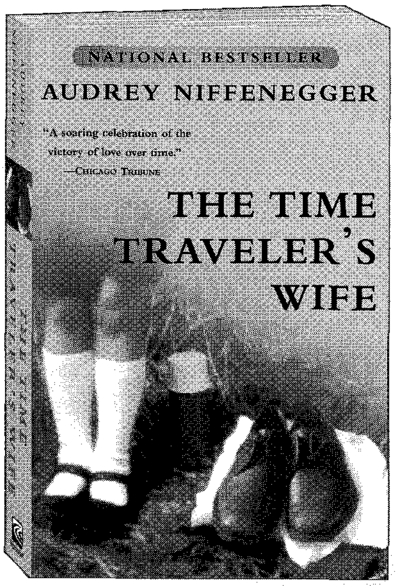

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THIS WEEK

ROCK WITH BITE

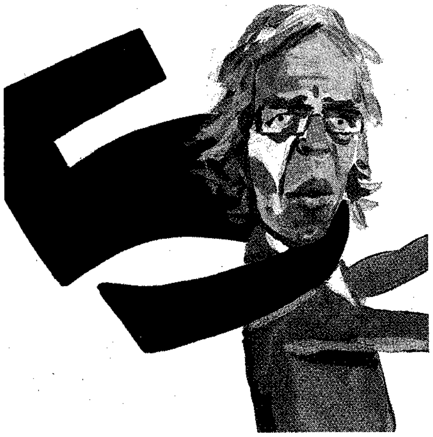
In Detroit rock circles, the White Stripes may have the glitzy look, but the working-class heart remains with bands like the Detroit Cobras. Led by the vocalist Rachel Nagy—a former butcher and stripper—and the guitarist Maribel Restrepo, the Cobras are a bar band extraordinaire. They cover classic rock and soul music from the pre-Beatles era and have revived several superb songs, including Otis Redding's "Shout Bama Lama" and Mickey Lee Lane's "Hey Sailor." This week, they'll perform with the psychobilly stalwart the Reverend Horton Heat and the female blues-rock duo Mr. Airplane Man. (Bowery Ballroom, May 28; see Night Life.)

ART THROUGH OBSTRUCTION

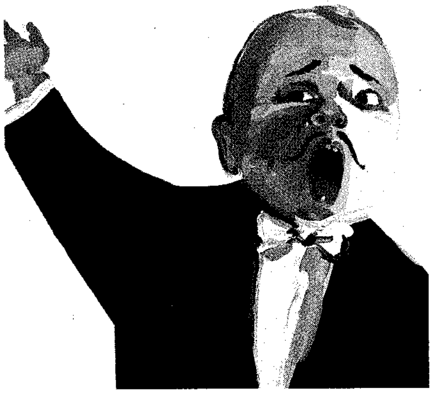
In "The Five Obstructions," the idiosyncratic Danish director Lars von Trier browbeats his former mentor Jorgen Leth. Von Trier asks Leth to remake the celebrated 1967 short "The Perfect Human" with highly artificial constraints: no shot can last more than twelve frames, the film must take the form of a crude cartoon, and so forth. When Leth succeeds, von Trier tries to make things more difficult. The result is a reality-bending exploration of rivalry and creativity. (Film Forum, starts May 26; see Movies.)

OPERA OASIS

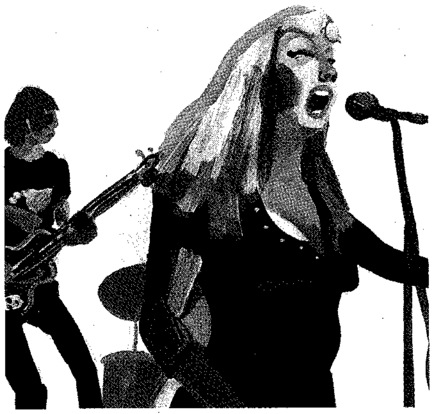
May is a dead space in between the close of the regular opera season and the beginning of the summer festivals. But there are plenty of good singers still in town, and City Opera puts them to work in "VOX: Showcasing American Composers," a mini-festival offering excerpts from works in their infancy, performed with orchestral accompaniment. This year's composers include Tom Cipullo, Elodie Lauten, John Eaton ("The Reverend Jim Jones," a fantasy about the murderous religious demagogue, performed with a rock quartet), and Richard Danielpour (the slave drama "Margaret Garner," a collaboration with the writer Toni Morrison). (Symphony Space, May 26-27; see Classical Music.)



Five Obstructions," a new film by on Trier and Jorgen Leth.



New works by American composers, at City Opera's VOX festival.



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A night of retro rock and roll with the garage band the Detroit Cobras.

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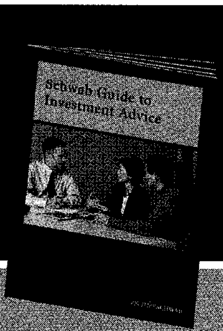

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THE THEATRE
OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.

ADDRESS UNKNOWN
Jim Dale and William Atherton star in a play based on Kathrine Kressmann Taylor's book about a friendship between a Jewish art dealer in San Francisco and his German business partner, which deteriorates after the latter moves to Nazi Germany. Directed by Frank Dunlop. Previews begin May 28. (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 212-239-6200.)

"Advertisement to Bolster National Sentiment, Brooklyn, NY, 2003," by Ilkka Uimonen, in "Off Broadway" (see Photography).

MAGNUM

CHINESE FRIENDS
A Chinese strategy game serves as an allegory for a competition between a son and his estranged father, in a new play by Jon Robin Baitz. Directed by Robert Egan. With sets by Santo Loquasto and lighting by Donald Holder. One preview on May 26. Opens May 27 at 7:30. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 212-279-4200.)

HERE LIES JENNY
Bebe Neuwirth stars in a musical performance that weaves together the music of Kurt Weill and
ics by Bertolt Brecht, Ira Gershwin, Langston
ghes, and Alan Jay Lerner (among others).
reographed by Ann Reinking and directed by
Rees, with musical direction by Leslie Stifel-
ens May 27 at 11. (Zipper Theatre, 336
212-239-6200.)

TOUS LES JOURS
heatre season in Sag Harbor kicks off
omedy by Charles L. Mee, starring
cted by Zoe Caldwell. May 25-June
eatre, Long Wharf. 631-725-9500.)

Company presents a new pro-
tish military base on Cyprus.
Part of the audience sits among the actors, in the middle of the stage. Starring Lloyd Notice as Othello and Anthony Cochrane as Iago. Directed and adapted by Robert Richmond. In previews. (Baruch Performing Arts Center, 25th St. between Lexington and Third Aves. 212-239-6200.)

THE SEAGULL
Earle Gister—who taught Frances McDormand, John Turturro, Chris Noth, Liev Schreiber, and Paul Giamatti, among others, during two decades at the Yale Drama School—makes his New York directorial début with a production of the Chehkov classic, which stars Chris Messina and Lynne Bolton. May 25-29 at 7:30, with a benefit performance for the Actors Center on May 24 at 7:30. (Second Stage, 307 W. 43rd St. 212-246-4422.)

OPENED RECENTLY

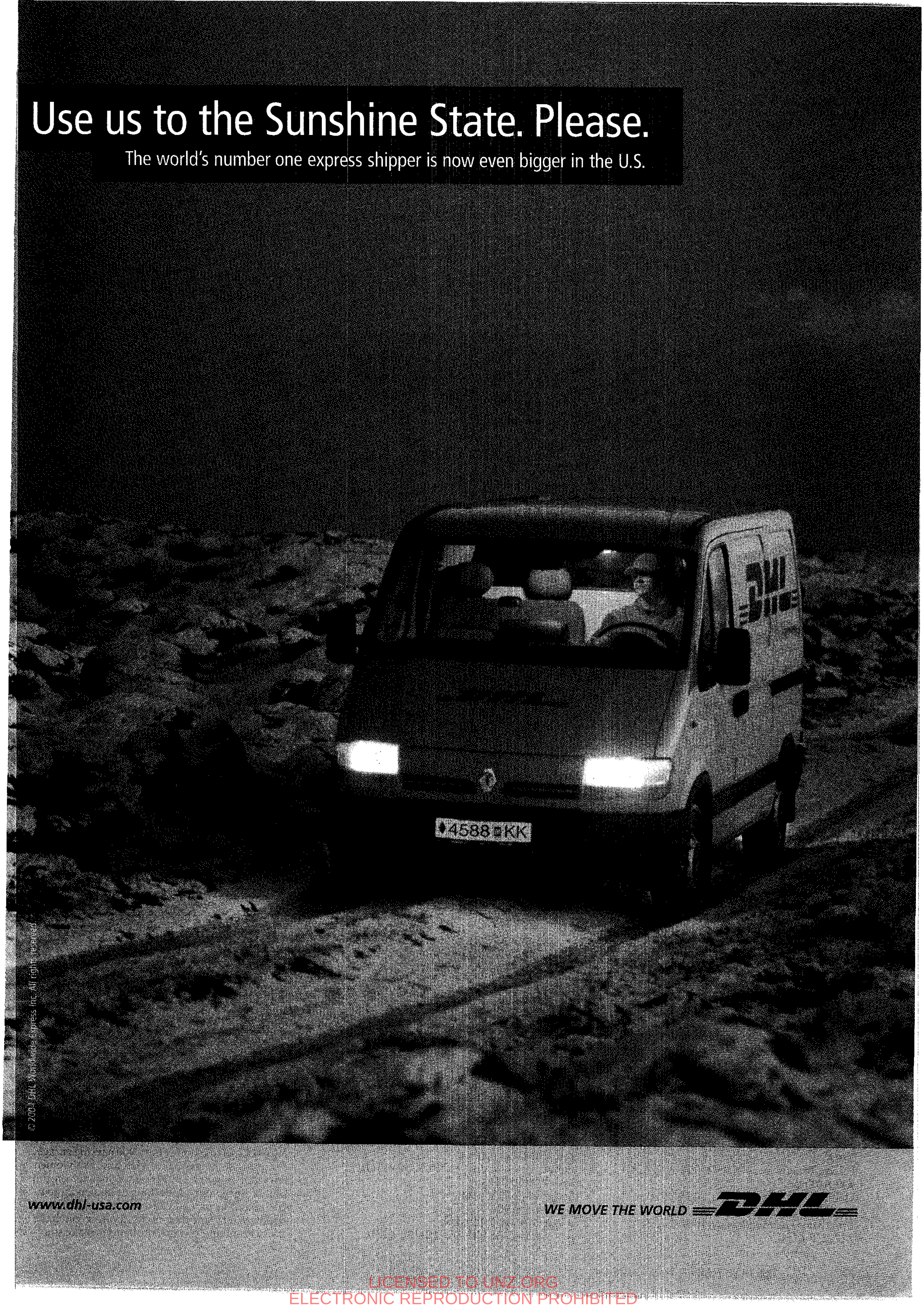
ASSASSINS
The Roundabout Theatre Company's revival of Stephen Sondheim and John Weidman's musical about nine marginalized souls who each took aim at an American President is well sung, gorgeous to look at, and meticulous in its detail. But it has been freighted with more weight than it can properly carry. This dark cartoon—a kind of glib carnival of carnage—was first performed in 1991, at the beginning of the Gulf War, and was meant to have its Broadway début just after September 11, 2001. The delay of more than two years has not helped the show's karma or its message. Directed by Joe Mantello. (Reviewed in our issue of 5/3/04.) (Studio 54, at 254 W. 54th St. 212-239-6200.)

BOY
In a play by Julia Jordan, a new arrival in a small town (T. R. Knight) forms a complicated friendship with a local man (Kelly AuCoin). Directed by Joe Calarco. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Primary Stages, 354 W. 45th St. 212-279-4200.)

BUG
As written by Tracy Letts and directed by Dexter Bullard, this play is never exactly what it seems. It begins deceptively simply, in a residential hotel somewhere near Oklahoma City, in a town God may or may not have forsaken. Agnes White (the incomparable Shannon Cochran), who works as a bartender, stands at the door to her small, dingy room. Before long, a friend shows up with a little distraction—a guy named Peter Evans (Michael Shannon), who seems to want to hang out. Scenes of casual surrealism culminate, in the second half of the play, in acts of physical and emotional violence that do more than shock: they arouse both pity and despair. Cochran and Shannon give not only two of the most nuanced performances you'll ever see but two of the greatest. (5/17/04) (Barrow Street Theatre, 27 Barrow St., at Seventh Ave. 212-239-6200.)

FROZEN
Bryony Lavery's play about a grieving woman whose daughter was killed by a pedophile has moved to Broadway. Starring Swoosie Kurtz and Brían F. O'Byrne and directed by Doug Hughes. (Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 212-239-6200.)

GUINEA PIG SOLO
In Brett C. Leonard's ambitious adaptation of Büchner's "Woyzeck," José Solo (the brilliant John Ortiz), a veteran of the current war in Iraq, finds himself trapped in post-September 11th New York. José longs for a cushion to shield him from the various blows that life has dealt him, and he is also struggling to win back his girlfriend, Vivian (Judy Reyes), and their catatonic son. But after Vivian's friend Nikki (the very funny Portia) points out that a handsome police officer (Jason Manuel Olazábal) has taken a shine to her, Vivian reaches, with some trepidation, for a new dream. As José, Ortiz has an intensity that is all his own—his emotional depth is perfectly balanced by a tender intellectualism, and it complements the charismatic physicality of Reyes's scenes with Olazábal once their courtship begins. Directed by Ian Belton. (5/17/04) (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 212-239-6200.)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HOMEBODY/KABUL
Tony Kushner has retooled his 2001 play about a British housewife's fascination with Afghanistan, which now appears at BAM in a new production starring Linda Emond, Reed Birney, and, in her New York stage début, Maggie Gyllenhaal. Directed by Frank Galati. (Harvey Theatre, 651 Fulton St. 718-636-4100. Through May 30.)

INTIMATE APPAREL
Lynn Nottage's subtle and compelling play, a Roundabout Theatre Company production, reveals the fine emotional filigree of an ordinary black woman's life and the social forces that shape it. Starring Viola Davis and Russell Hornsby. Directed by Daniel Sullivan. (4/19 & 26/04) (Laura Pels, 111 W. 46th St. 212-719-1300.)

LIGHT RAISE THE ROOF
A new play by Kia Corthron, about a man who struggles to find housing for the homeless. Michael John Garcés directs. (Reviewed in this issue.) (New York Theatre Workshop, 79 E. 4th St. 212-239-6200.)

THE MYSTERY OF THE CHARITY OF JOAN OF ARC
An elegant, minimalist production, directed by David Herskovits for Target Margin, of Charles Péguy's 1912 play about the religious obsession that guided Joan of Arc. A pre-warrior Joan (Sophia Skiles) struggles to understand what her calling requires of her through conversations with a young confidante (Jerusha Klemperer) and a nun (Daphne Gaines). Translated from the French by Julian Green. (HERE, 145 Sixth Ave., near Spring St. 212-868-4444. Through June 5.)

SEVEN
Seven Greek classics by the Great Jones Repertory play at La Mama for the next month, including one première, "Antigone," directed by Ellen Stewart, with music by Elizabeth Swados. The other six are "Medea," "Electra," "The Trojan Women," "Mythos Oedipus," "Seven Against Thebes," and "Dionysus: Filius Dei." (74A E. 4th St. 212-475-7710. Through June 13.)

SIGHT UNSEEN
Laura Linney stars in a revival of Donald Margulies's play about a successful but lonely artist who looks up an old flame. Directed by Daniel Sullivan. (Biltmore, 261 W. 47th St. 212-239-6200.)

WHERE DO WE LIVE
Christopher Shinn wrote and directed this play, set just before and just after 9/11, about the intersecting lives of young men in adjacent Lower East Side apartments. Stephen (Luke MacFarlane) is an idealistic writer with a boyfriend; Shedrick (Burl Moseley) is a brooding African-American man who wants to quit dealing drugs and get a hotel job. Shinn fills the neighborhood with a well-observed, diverse supporting cast: a welfare-dependent amputee, a trust-fund baby, a British expat, and a lonely Asian man (who features in a long sex scene with Stephen). As Stephen and Shedrick undertake a limited friendship, Shinn shows that proximity doesn't guarantee understanding between neighbors. (Vineyard, 108 E. 15th St. 212-353-0303. Through May 30.)

"Chinese Friends," opening this week at Playwrights Horizons.

EDEL RODRIGUEZ

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AIDA
Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 212-307-4747.

AVENUE Q
Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.

BOMBAY DREAMS
Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 212-239-6200.

THE BOY FROM OZ
Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.

BRIDGE & TUNNEL
45 Bleecker Street Theatre, at 45 Bleecker St. 212-307-4100.

CAROLINE, OR CHANGE
O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 212-239-6200.

CHICAGO
Ambassador, 215 W. 49th St. 212-239-6200.

THE DISTANCE FROM HERE
The Duke, 229 W. 42nd St. 212-239-6200.

EMBEDDED
Public, 425 Lafayette St. 212-239-6200. (Closes June 5.)

FIDDLER ON THE ROOF
Minskoff, 200 W. 45th St. 212-307-4100.

FINIAN'S RAINBOW
Irish Rep, 132 W. 22nd St. 212-727-2737.

42ND STREET
Ford Center, 213 W. 42nd St. 212-307-4100.

GOLDA'S BALCONY
Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200.

GYPSY
Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200. (Closes May 30.)

HAIRSPRAY
Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 212-307-4100.

I AM MY OWN WIFE
Lyceum, 149 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.

JUMPERS
Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 212-307-7171.

MOVIN' OUT
Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 212-307-4100.

THE NORMAL HEART
Public, 425 Lafayette St. 212-239-6200.

THE PRODUCERS
St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200.

A RAISIN IN THE SUN
Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.

SARAH, SARAH
City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 212-581-1212. (Closes June 6.)

TWENTIETH CENTURY
American Airlines Theatre, 227 W. 42nd St. 212-719-1300.

WICKED
Gershwin, 222 W. 51st St. 212-307-4100.

WONDERFUL TOWN
Al Hirschfeld, 302 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.

DANCE

AMERICAN BALLET THEATRE
The week includes six performances of a repertory program and one performance of A.B.T.'s new production of "Raymonda." For a full cast list, see www.abt.org. ♦ May 26-28 and May 31 at 8 and May 29 at 2 and 8: "Theme and Variations," "Tchaikovsky Pas de Deux," "Mozartiana," and "Ballet Imperial." ♦ June 1 at 8: "Raymonda." (Metropolitan Opera House, Lincoln Center. 212-362-6000.)

NEW YORK CITY BALLET
The next two weeks feature dances set to music by American composers, including Copland, Barber, Gershwin, and Bernstein. ♦ May 25 at 7:30 (an all-Balanchine program): "Who Cares?," "Western Symphony," and "Stars and Stripes." ♦ May 26 at 8: "Fancy Free," "Barber Violin Concerto," and "Stars and Stripes." ♦ May 27 at 8: "Interplay," "Tarantella," "Barber Violin Concerto," and "Western Symphony." ♦ May 28 at 8: "Fancy Free," "Calcium Light Night," "Sonatas and Interludes," and "Stars and Stripes." ♦ May 29 at 2 (an all-Balanchine program): "Western Symphony," "Ivesiana," and "Who Cares?" ♦ May 29 at 8: "Who Cares?" "Barber Violin Concerto," and "I'm Old Fashioned." ♦ May 30 at 3: "Interplay," "Calcium Light Night," "Tarantella," and "Stars and Stripes." ♦ June 1 at 7:30: "Glass Pieces," "Sonatas and Interludes," "Ivesiana," and "I'm Old Fashioned." (New York State Theatre, Lincoln Center. 212-870-5570.)

THE PARSONS DANCE COMPANY
In the first week of the company's two-week season at the Joyce, the Ahn Trio performs live to a program of new and repertory work, including the New York premières of "Slow Dance" and "Swing Shift," both set to original music by Kenji Bunch. In the second week, David Parsons himself performs a new solo. (175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 212-242-0800. June 1 at 7:30. Through June 13.)

"MARGOT FONTEYN IN AMERICA: A CELEBRATION"
An exhibition at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, curated by Robert Gottlieb and Joy Williams Brown, celebrates the ballerina's grace, glamour, and charm with photographs, film footage, original costumes, and couture designs by Yves Saint Laurent. (Vincent Astor Gallery, the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Lincoln Center. For information, call 212-870-1630.)

"NOIR"
Like the films that inspired it, Noémie Lafrance's new work, set in a Lower East Side parking garage, is an exercise in style. Five men and five women perform in a sultry but disjointed manner on the ramp of the garage's fifth floor, as audience members, seated in parked cars, peer through steamy windows and crane their necks, trying to catch the action. From time to time, the dancers make smol-

dering eye contact with spectators. (Delancey and Essex Municipal Parking Garage, 105 Essex St. 212-868-4444. May 26-29 at 7:30 and 9:30.)

"DANCEAFRICA 2004"
In Chuck Davis's twenty-seventh annual festival at BAM, the performers are American—except for the Kusun Ensemble, visiting from Ghana with their "nokoko" fusion of Afro-pop, jazz rhythm, and dance—but their artistic connections to Africa are strong. The Ezibu Muntu African Dance Company, from Virginia, showcases Yoruban dance; the New York-based Bambara Drum and Dance Ensemble demonstrates Senegalese traditions; and Shaka Zulu, from New Orleans, keeps alive the Zulu art of stilt dancing. (Howard Gilman Opera House, 35 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn. 718-636-4100. May 28 at 7:30, May 29 at 2 and 7:30, and May 30 at 3.)

"TAP EXTRAVAGANZA 2004"
Each year on Bill Robinson's birthday, the tap-dance community honors its own with an overstuffed show. This time around, the awardees include Arthur Duncan, a regular on "The Lawrence Welk Show" who kept tap alive on television for decades, and the feisty Mable Lee. These septuagenarians have no trouble working a crowd—check out Lee's flirty squeals and hip thrusts. Hosted by Jason Samuels Smith, an L.A.-based dancer known for his technical feats, with performances by Jimmy Slyde and Savion Glover. (Fashion Institute of Technology, Haft Auditorium, 227 W. 27th St. 212-252-2927. May 30 at 7.)

EIKO & KOMA
In "Tree Song," performed in the graveyard of St. Mark's Church, the Japanese minimalist duo explore themes of evolution and resurrection. Dressed like cavemen, in loose black fur, their faces caked in white, they start the piece on the ground, prostrate, and slowly struggle to their feet. (Second Ave. at 10th St. 212-674-8194. May 27-30 at 8:30.)

BALLETMET COLUMBUS
The second week of the Ohio-based troupe's début season at the Joyce. (175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 212-242-0800. May 26-28 at 8, May 29 at 2 and 8, and May 30 at 2.)

"TETRAPOD"
Clare Byrne's dancers, along with their guests, Nicholas Leichter and Adriane Fang, transform themselves from bipeds into wild four-legged creatures, swinging their torsos, falling hard to the ground, and leaping roughly into one another's arms. Set to Mozart's "Hunt" concerto and jazz riffs, "Tetrapod" bears traces of ballet, Graham, and even tap. (Flea, 41 White St., at Broadway. 212-226-2407. May 26-28 at 7, May 29 at 3 and 7, and May 30 at 3.)

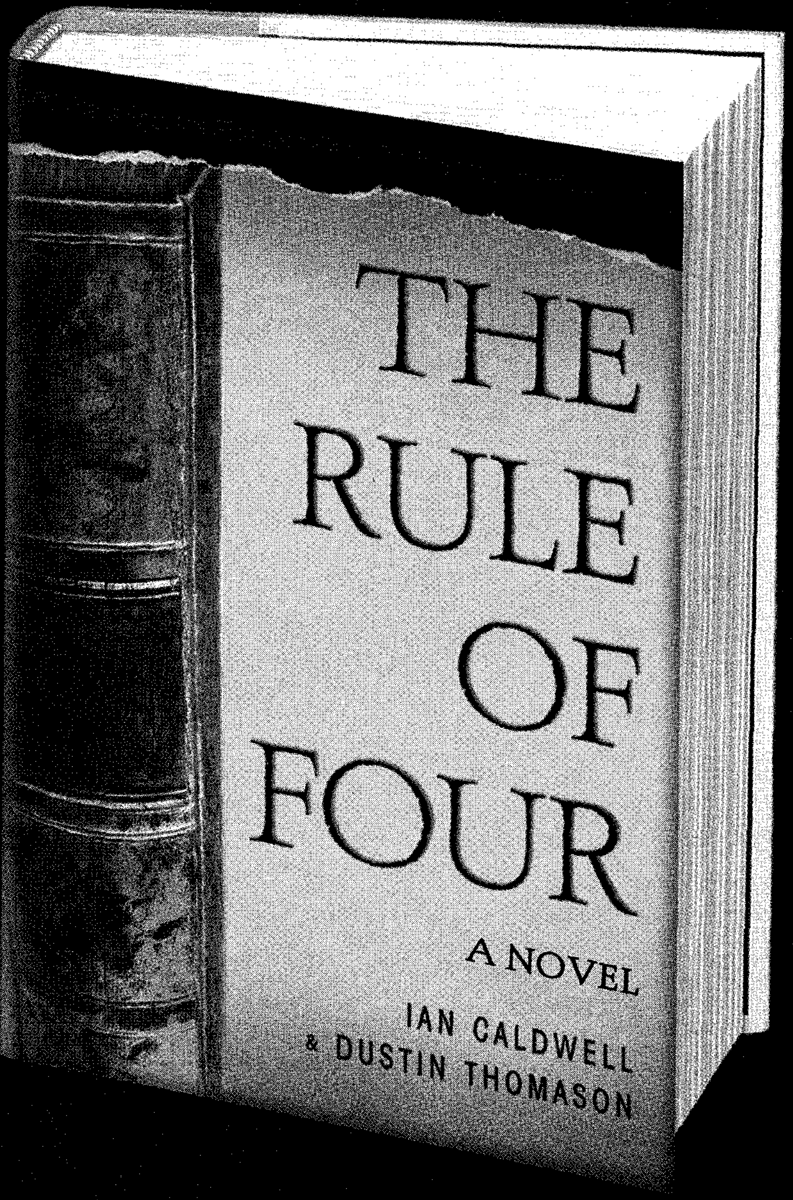
NIGHT LIFE
CONCERTS

VISION FESTIVAL
This downtown gathering, now in its ninth year, presents seven days of adventurous and occasionally fearsome music that rekindles the spirit of avant-garde jazz. Among the highlights: a trio reuniting the Ornette Coleman cohorts James (Blood) Ulmer, Jamaladeen Tacuma, and Calvin Weston (on May 25); the reinvigorated bass legend Henry Grimes with Marilyn Crispell and Andrew Cyrille (on May 26); the New Orleans saxophonist Kidd Jordan (on May 28); and the long-awaited reunion of the Revolutionary Ensemble (on May 30). (The Center, 268 Mulberry St. For more information, call 212-696-6681. Through May 31.)

VELVET REVOLVER
One of the first rock supergroups of the new millennium to generate genuine excitement, Velvet Revolver unites the singer Scott Weiland (formerly of the Stone Temple Pilots) with erstwhile members of Guns N' Roses. Weiland's stubborn aversion to heroin rehabilitation has cast the band's future in doubt. Despite his troubles, their début album hits store shelves next month. (Roseland, 239 W. 52nd St. 212-307-7171. May 26 at 8.)

"GREAT HIGH MOUNTAIN TOUR"
Alison Krauss and Union Station, Ralph Stanley, the Nashville Bluegrass Band, Jerry Douglas, Ollabelle, and others perform music from the movies

"Ingenious."
–The New York Times



"If Scott Fitzgerald, Umberto Eco, and Dan Brown teamed up to write a novel, the result would be THE RULE OF FOUR.... A perfect blend of suspense and a sensitive coming-of-age story." –Nelson DeMille

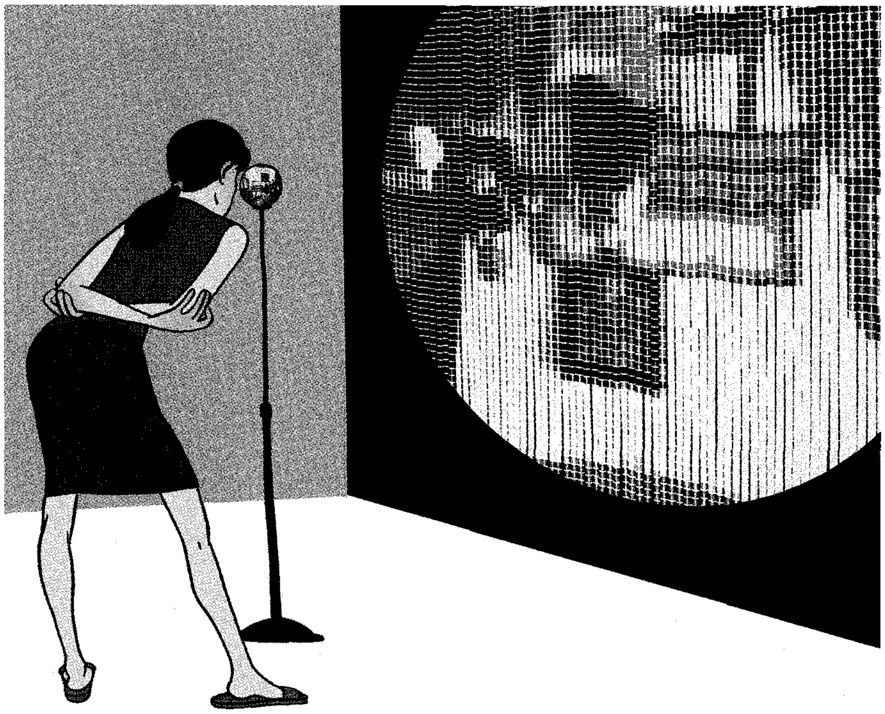
"A smart, swift, multitextured tale that both entertains and informs."
–San Francisco Chronicle Book Review

Unravel the mystery yourself at www.RuleOfFour.com

"O Brother, Where Art Thou?" and "Cold Mountain." (Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 212-307-7171. May 27 at 7:30.)

MOTORSOFT

The terrifying local ensemble, led by the novelist, guitarist, and organist Norman Coady, fuses the hyperactive imagination of a literary zine with the pomp and epic sweep of vintage Pink Floyd. Coady has written a four-part novel, "The Decline & Fall of All Y'all," about a postapocalyptic Manhattan where hipsters use old vinyl records for currency. His band brings the story to life on a thunderous guitar-driven album of the same name. This show marks the close of "Tendency for Ascendancy," a weeklong exhibition of dioramas and installations inspired by Coady's fictitious New York City. (The New Space, 530 W. 21st St. No tickets necessary. May 27 at 8.)



Devorah Sperber's pixellated reconstructions of Old Master paintings made from spools of thread, at McKenzie through May 28 (see Art).

ZOHAR LAZAR

"THE SWING BALL"

Big-band dancing returns to the Supper Club for one night, with Ron Sunshine and his band and George Gee's Jump Jive & Wailers. The charming PG-13 burlesque act the World Famous Pontani Sisters will also be on hand. (240 W. 47th St. 212-921-1940. May 30, with dance lessons at 7 and music at 8.)

IN FLAMES / KILLSWITCH ENGAGE

An evening of high-volume punishment as the Swedish death-metal warlords In Flames ride with their pals and touring mates, Killswitch Engage, from Massachusetts. Heads will bang. (Roseland. June 1 at 7:30.)

CLUBS

Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.

BOWERY BALLROOM

6 Delancey St. (212-533-2111)—May 28: The **Detroit Cobras** (see This Week). With the **Reverend Horton Heat,** who specializes in that bawdy brand of skewed rockabilly created in the early eighties by the Cramps, and **Mr. Airplane Man,** two women from Boston who twist their guitars and drums into energetic blues-rock.

FEZ

380 Lafayette St. (212-533-7000)—May 28-30: The Loser's Lounge pays tribute to **Prince.** The **Mingus Big Band** still packs them in every Thursday.

IRVING PLAZA

17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (212-777-6800)—May 26: The self-appointed party vigilante **Andrew W.K.** continues his campaign to give furious heavy metal a pop appeal. He may be a one-trick pony, but he executes that trick with manic enthusiasm. June 1-2: The reverb-saturated country rock of **My Morning Jacket.**

JOE'S PUB

425 Lafayette St. (212-539-8777)—May 28: The **Sharp Things,** a local ensemble led by guitarist Perry Serpa that specializes in retro-flavored, sentimental pop. May 29: The guitar virtuoso **Vernon Reid,** a founder of the Black Rock Coalition, is best known for his work with the late-eighties outfit Living Colour. He's here with his band Masque, which fuses elements of aggressive jazz, funk, and rock.

LQ

511 Lexington Ave., between 47th and 48th Sts. (212-593-7575)—May 26: The Afro-Cuban rhythm machine the **Machito Orchestra,** now under the leadership of Mario Grillo, the son of the founder, keeps dancers moving at this midtown nightspot.

MERCURY LOUNGE

217 E. Houston St. (212-260-4700)—May 28: The **Hackensaw Boys,** an octet from Charlottesville, Virginia, tear apart mountain music with revved-up flair. **Two-Dollar Pistols,** a country-revival band from North Carolina led by the drummer turned guitarist John Howie, Jr., are also on the bill. Their new album, "Hands Up!," is packed with twang-filled songs of regret, heartbreak, and drinking. May 29: The **Actionslacks,** from the San Francisco Bay area, have been making snappy pop songs for nearly ten years.

NORTHSIX

66 N. 6th St., Williamsburg, Brooklyn (718-599-5103)—May 28: The **Thermals,** a clever trio from Portland, Oregon, traffic in brisk indie rock.

SIN-É

150 Attorney St. (212-388-0077)—May 27: The three-piece **Runner and the Thermodynamics** honed their seventies power-pop on the Boston bar circuit. They have a drummer who likes to emulate Keith Moon and a reputation for electrifying live shows. With the **Capitol Years,** who transform standard garage rock into something more obscure and interesting through sudden tempo changes and a seemingly apoplectic guitarist.

TONIC

107 Norfolk St. (212-358-7503)—May 28: **Birdland,** a duo from Baltimore whose sound evokes the macabre world of Nick Cave and Bauhaus. The powerhouse chanteuse Katrina Ford is backed by Sean Antanaitis, who plays, among other things, a guitorgan (a guitar/organ combination). They pack more punch than many bands three times their size. With the multilingual Brooklyn ensemble **Barbez.**

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

BLUE NOTE

131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (212-475-8592)—Over a forty-year career, the guitarist **Taj Mahal** has become as venerated as the legendary bluesmen he modelled himself after. He's here with his trio through May 30.

DANNY'S

346 W. 46th St. (212-265-8133)—May 26: **Rakesh Satyal,** a singer who's also an editor at Random House, and **Jonathan Burnham,** a pianist and the president of Miramax Books, perform a night of standards by Bernstein, Gershwin, and Rodgers. Saturdays and Sundays: the inimitable vocalist **Blossom Dearie.**

55 BAR

55 Christopher St. (212-929-9883)—May 25: **Leni Stern,** a fleet and lyrical guitarist, has an inventive bent, like her husband (and fellow-guitarist), **Mike Stern.** He's here on May 24 and May 26.

IRIDIUM

1650 Broadway, at 51st St. (212-582-2121)—May 25-30: For a brief moment some forty years ago the alto saxophonist **Jackie McLean** hooked up with the vibraphonist **Bobby Hutcherson** and the trombonist and composer **Grachan Moncur III.** The three made a few risky and satisfying albums that balanced free jazz with modal-hard-bop solidity. They've reunited infrequently; this could be a real event. Mondays belong to the electric-guitar innovator **Les Paul.**

LE JAZZ AU BAR

41 E. 58th St. (212-308-9455)—May 27-30 and June 1-5: **René Marie** got a late start (her professional career didn't begin in earnest until the age of forty), but she's making up for lost time. If her repertoire seems familiar, her spirited and often inventive delivery is anything but.

SWEET RHYTHM

88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (212-255-3626)—May 27-29: **Louis Hayes and the Cannonball Legacy Band.** There's no one more qualified to lead a tribute band honoring the alto saxophonist Cannonball Adderley than the drummer Hayes, the swinging motor behind the Adderley unit during its glory days.

VILLAGE VANGUARD

178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (212-255-4037)—Through May 30: **Bill McHenry,** a young tenor saxophonist with a burly tone and far-reaching ideas about where jazz can go, makes his Vanguard début as a leader. He's backed by an ace support team: the guitarist **Ben Monder,** the bassist **Reid Anderson,** of the Bad Plus, and the brilliant veteran drummer **Paul Motian.** The **Vanguard Jazz Orchestra** holds sway on Mondays.

ART

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM

Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (212-879-5500)—A couple of curators in the Costume Institute had the marvellous idea of installing brocaded silk dresses and coats embroidered with silver thread on mannequins arranged *en conversant* in the period rooms of the Wrightsman Galleries. **"Dangerous Liaisons: Fashion and Furniture in the Eighteenth Century"** unfolds like a racy novel, with each mirrored and panelled chamber inhabited by richly apparelled ladies and gentlemen enjoying music lessons and card games, knocking over vases and swooning onto sofas in pantomimed ardor. Through Aug. 8. ♦ For sixteen days in February, 2005, Christo and his wife-collaborator, Jeanne-Claude, will install seventy-five hundred orange fabric gates at twelve-foot intervals along twenty-three miles of pedestrian pathways in Central Park. **"Christo and Jeanne-Claude: The Gates, Central Park, New York"** documents the genesis of the project—begun in 1979—through photographs, working drawings and collages, maps, and samples of the hardware for the sixteen-foot-tall gates. Through July 25. ♦ A jewel of a show, **"Klee: The Late Years"** vivifies a great artist whose prestige has suffered from generations of imitators who probably no longer know who they're imitating. Twenty-four top-drawer little paintings, watercolors, and drawings from 1925 to 1940 explore the range of his talent, from glyphic cartooning to transfer printing, sprayed watercolor, slathered plaster, and other wizardries. Through June 27. ♦ **"Byzantium: Faith and Power (1261-1557)."** Through July 4. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:30, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART (MOMA QNS)
33rd St. at Queens Blvd., Long Island City (212-708-9400)—**"Roth Time,"** a gargantuan retrospective of the late, under-known German-Swiss artist Dieter Roth, is on view at MOMA and in a smaller show at its affiliate, P.S. 1. Through June 7. ♦ **"Humble Masterpieces,"** a collection of a hundred and twenty-two well-designed objects either drawn from the museum's collection (such as a Post-it note) or under consideration for acquisition (such as M&M's). Through Sept. 27. (Open Thursdays through Mondays, 10 to 5, and Friday evenings until 7:45.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (212-423-3500)—**"A Year with Children,"** a show of work created by New York City schoolchildren in the Guggenheim's Learning Through Art program, opens May 27. ♦ Selections from the permanent collection are on display. (Open Saturdays through Wednesdays, 10 to 5:45, and Fridays, 10 to 8.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART
Madison Ave. at 75th St. (212-570-3676)—In 1954, when the Whitney moved from its original location, at 10 West Eighth Street, the museum sold Thomas Hart Benton's **"The Arts of Life in America,"** which had been commissioned in 1932 for its library. The five panels, painted at the nadir of the Depression, depict time-capsule regional clichés: the South's panel shows religious revival meetings, the West's broncoroping, the city's cabaret. Benton's regionalist rhetoric obscured his real talents, still amply visible here, for skewed composition and swirling fish-eye perspective, the two kinetic traits that influenced his student Jackson Pollock. Through Jan. 2. ♦ Painting and drawing reign in a startlingly good Biennial. Handmade pictures exercise a gravitational tug on practically everything in the show, including sculptures, installations, videos, photographs, films, and digital animation. Paintings by younger artists like Elizabeth Peyton, Laura Owens, and Lecia Dole-Recio exchange energy with those by veterans like David Hockney, Mel Bochner, and Robert Mangold. Video installation emerges as a fully mature art form in strong works by Catherine Sullivan, Craigie Horsfield, Eve Sussman, and Slater Bradley. Installational hybrids of painting and sculpture—dominant in the past decade—show signs of exhaustion; an exception is a delightful neo-psychedelic disco by a group called assume vivid astro focus. Through May 30. (Open Wednesdays through Thursdays, and weekends, 11 to 6, and Fridays, 1 to 9.)

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY
Central Park W. at 79th St. (212-769-5100)—**"Frogs: A Chorus of Colors"** opens May 29. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45.)

BROOKLYN MUSEUM OF ART
200 Eastern Parkway (718-638-5000)—A de-facto borough biennial, the sprawling survey **"Open House: Working in Brooklyn"** has three hundred works by two hundred artists in every conceivable medium. Inevitably, the show is a bit of a hodgepodge, with a surprising emphasis on easel painting. But the eclecticism generates ample electricity—the show is likely to become a landmark. Through Aug. 15. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

JEWISH MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 92nd St. (212-423-3200)—**"Modigliani: Beyond the Myth"** gathers more than eighty of the artist's paintings, drawings, and sculptures. Through Sept. 10. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 11 to 5:45; Thursdays, 11 to 8; and Fridays, 11 to 3.)

STUDIO MUSEUM IN HARLEM
144 W. 125th St. (212-864-4500)—**"Fred Wilson: Objects and Installations, 1979-2000"** is the first retrospective of work by the artist famous for his mock museum installations. Wilson's critiques of museums' prejudices are really aimed at institutions that privilege white European culture and its descendants, so it's curious to see them in a more sympathetic venue. Irony lurks in a few places: for instance, the Studio Museum's guard is dark-skinned, like the dummies in museum uniforms in "Guarded View." But Wilson's artist-as-curator productions, from his "Colonial Collection" of African masks blindfolded with colonial flags to his "Friendly Natives," vitrines with unidentified plastic human skeletons, highlight much about history and art institutions that is ignored elsewhere. Through July 4. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, and Sundays, noon to 6; Saturdays, 10 to 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.

AGNES MARTIN
Six decades into her career as a painter, Martin is adding some new tricks. She hasn't abandoned the grid that customarily anchors her canvases, but now a few feature floating geometric forms. "Homage to Life" includes a big black trapezoid hovering like a spaceship in a silver ground, while "Untitled #1" sports two proud triangles with yellow tips. The black ground of "The Sea" is broken with thin white lines that look colored from a distance. Canvases with yellow, blue, and white pinstripes, like wainscoting or seersucker, demonstrate that the minimalist work coming out of this nonagenarian's New Mexico studio can be cheerful as well as austere. Through June 30. (PaceWildenstein, 32 E. 57th St. 212-421-3292.)

Short List

LUCIAN FREUD
Acquavella, 18 E. 79th St. 212-734-6300.
Open Mondays. Through May 27.

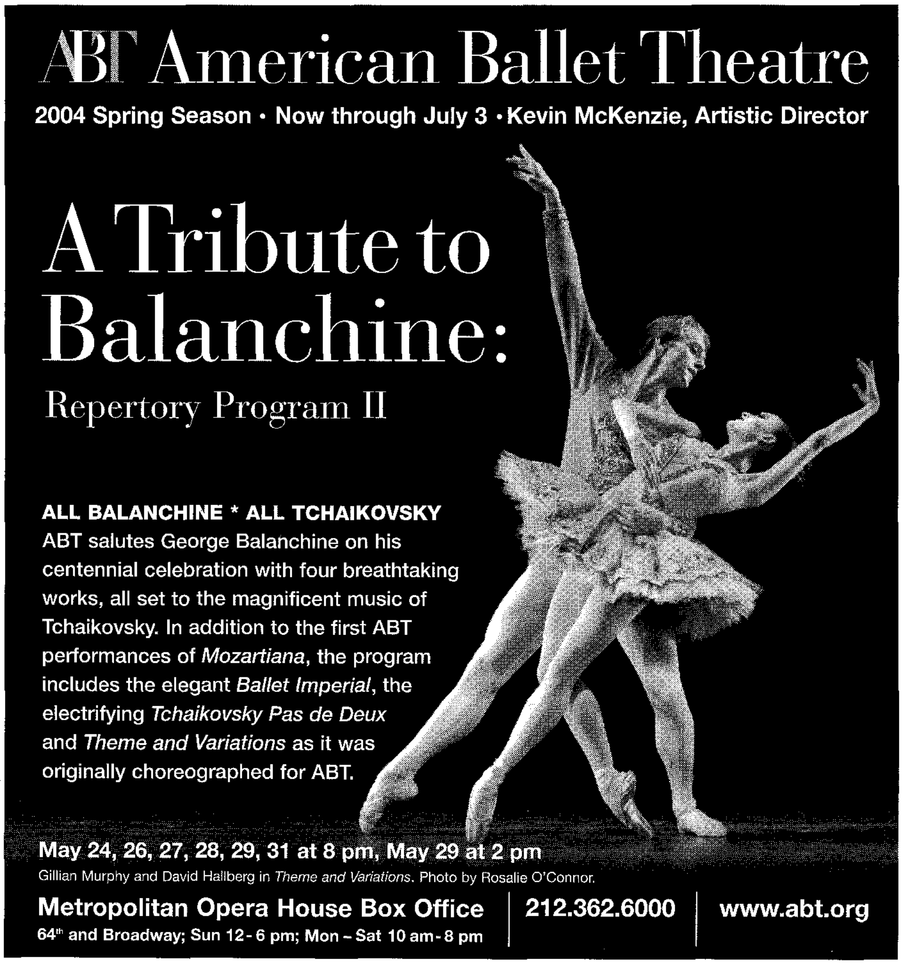
RED GROOMS
De Nagy, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.
212-262-5050. Through May 28.

JEFF KOONS
C&M, 45 E. 78th St. 212-861-0020.
Through June 5.

GALLERIES—CHELSEA

ATELIER VAN LIESHOUT
This utopian design collective has established a tongue-in-cheek "free state" within the city of Rotterdam; they make podlike, portable living structures and other surreal objects of quasi-utility. "Humans, Machines, and Body Parts" includes a giant model of the kidneys, an enormous funnel for force-feeding alcohol to seven inebriate citizens, and a diagram explaining how sexual parts might be detached and exchanged. Gleaming stainless-steel contraptions are queasily contrasted with limp and featureless mannequins, casting doubt on the humans' control over the machines. Through June 26. (Bonakdar, 521 W. 21st St. 212-414-4144.)

MARK FLOOD
Multicolored imprints of ripped and tattered lace are layered over bright-blue, yellow, and silver grounds. The violent presentation banishes any grandmotherly associations one might have with the frilly fabrics. Visitors may obsess over the artist's technique: how *did* he preserve those intricate pat-



ABT American Ballet Theatre
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A Tribute to Balanchine:
Repertory Program II

ALL BALANCHINE * ALL TCHAIKOVSKY
ABT salutes George Balanchine on his centennial celebration with four breathtaking works, all set to the magnificent music of Tchaikovsky. In addition to the first ABT performances of *Mozartiana*, the program includes the elegant *Ballet Imperial*, the electrifying *Tchaikovsky Pas de Deux* and *Theme and Variations* as it was originally choreographed for ABT.

May 24, 26, 27, 28, 29, 31 at 8 pm, May 29 at 2 pm
Gillian Murphy and David Hallberg in *Theme and Variations*. Photo by Rosalie O'Connor.

Metropolitan Opera House Box Office | 212.362.6000 | www.abt.org
64th and Broadway; Sun 12 - 6 pm; Mon - Sat 10 am - 8 pm

terns in acrylic paint? Step back and it ceases to matter: Flood's use of color and compositional skills are what's important. Through June 3. (American Fine Arts, 530 W. 22nd St. 212-727-7366.)

HILARY HARKNESS
Trashicomic faux-outsider art by an insider. Harkness's small, hyperdetailed paintings present between-decks high jinks on ships populated by skinny women in white miniskirts and bandeau bikini tops. The go-go-booted babes shinny up ladders, bounce down hatchways, and fondle the machinery, sometimes pausing for orgies of sex, violence, or both. It's as if a bevy of Bond girls were reimagined by some demented Grandma Moses imitator. Through June 26. (Mary Boone, 541 W. 24th St. 212-752-2929.)

RACHEL HARRISON
A frisky, enigmatic bricoleuse with affinities to Jessica Stockholder and Franz West, Harrison makes pieces that, in this show, employ lumpy sculptural forms; manically pointless carpentry; slathered pearlescent paint; a video presentation, facing a synagogue bench, of a Thoroughbred horse auction; a leaning stack of huge wall fragments bearing an occluded photograph of a photograph of Marilyn Monroe; and, honestly, lots more. Mystifying, fun. Through June 19. (Greene Naftali, 526 W. 26th St. 212-463-7770.)

JENNIFER AND KEVIN MC COY
The McCoys have built landscapes—a suburban back yard, an artist's studio, a seedy street in the industrial part of town—from tiny architectural model parts, then arranged bright lamps and video cameras to loom menacingly over the tabletop scenes. Closeup shots from the cameras are fed into a computer, sequenced, and projected onto a wall. Genres like horror, police procedural, and the tearjerker are invoked, but the stronger theme—of a sinister surveillance apparatus—is undeveloped. Through June 12. (Postmasters, 459 W. 19th St. 212-727-3323.)

ALBERT OEHLEN
New work by the painter who, more than any artist since Polke and Baselitz, still advances the frayed standard of German neo-expressionism. Passages of illegible figuration are tossed on crisp, white grounds with rousing painterly licks and chops. In the best pictures, miscellaneous elements seem transfixed by their sheer simultaneity, as in a David Salle montage. But Oehlen has none of Salle's sly detachment. Rather, with fervor intensified by palpably shaky conviction, he gives the impression of someone who yammers on to forestall a dire threat. Through June 19. (Luhring Augustine, 531 W. 24th St. 212-206-9100.)

MICHAL ROVNER
Rovner's vitrines contain stone tablets etched with cuneiform or some other early script—or at least that's the first impression. Step closer, and the ancient letters begin to wiggle: cameras built into the displays are projecting the marks onto smooth tabulae rasae. The marks themselves turn out to be rows of half-inch-high human bodies, bowing, jumping, and waving their arms in slow-motion semaphore. It's a nimble comment on our desire to "read" the past, touching on the idea of alphabets as embodiments of language, and on the relationship of film to writing. Through June 30. (PaceWildenstein, 534 W. 25th St. 212-929-7000.)

Short List

AMY CUTLER
Tonkonow, 535 W. 22nd St. 212-255-8450.
Through June 12.

WILLEM DE KOONING
Gagosian, 555 W. 24th St.
212-741-1111. Through June 19.

CLAES OLDENBURG AND COOSJE VAN BRUGGEN
Cooper, 534 W. 21st St. 212-255-1105.
Through July 2.

LORNA SIMPSON
Sean Kelly, 528 W. 29th St.
212-239-1181. Through June 5.

DEVORAH SPERBER
McKenzie, 511 W. 25th St. 212-989-5467.
Through May 28.

PHOTOGRAPHY

RENÉ BURRI
Burri is one of the most famous living Magnum photographers, with a body of work that includes classic portraits of Picasso, Che Guevara, and Giacometti and fifty years' worth of reportage from all over the world. This show, in the elegant gallery on top of the Hermès store on Madison Avenue, concentrates on his interest in architecture and architects, most notably Le Corbusier, Oscar Niemeyer, and Luis Barragán. There are well over a hundred pictures: of the chapel of Notre-Dame du Haut in Ronchamp, of a construction worker showing his family Brasília, of Nixon and Sadat with their wives at Giza, and even one of some aeration towers at a missile site in New Mexico that looks like it was taken by the Bechers. Through June 5. (Hermès, 691 Madison Ave., at 62nd St. 212-835-6444.)

TABLES FOR TWO

AMERICAN GIRL CAFÉ
609 Fifth Ave., at 49th St. (877-247-5223)—Lunch at the American Girl Café is the nine-year-old's equivalent of lunch at Bergdorf's, though the café, with its elegant black-and-white striped walls and red upholstered chairs, can make you feel like you're dining inside a box from Bendel's. It is on the top floor of American Girl Place, the new emporium devoted to the sale and care of American Girl dolls (there is a doll hospital and a doll hair salon). One is expected to bring a doll to lunch—the dolls get booster seats and teacups—but little girls who don't yet own one can choose from an array of loaners. An example of this rare species, a nine-year-old Dubliner who was in town recently for a few days of shopping, showed up the other day for the 11 A.M. seating and borrowed Samantha, a doll who, according to her bio, "is a bright compassionate girl living with her wealthy grandmother in 1904." The Irish Girl was shown to a table in the center of the room. She ordered pink lemonade, then recognized a friend at a nearby table. "I know loads of people in New York," she said, as she got up to say hello.

The American Girl brand, born to the Pleasant Company, belongs to Mattel now, and it is clear that market research has been conducted to identify cuisine that offends as few kiddie palates as possible. For an amuse-bouche the table gets cinnamon rolls redolent of airport layovers. The first course is a vast platter of carrot and celery sticks, fresh fruit, cubes of American cheese, mini-quiches, and pretzel bread sticks. The second course consists of various whineproof standbys, such as mini-cheeseburgers with curly fries, chicken tenders with macaroni and cheese, and tic-tac-toe pizza—a square grid with sliced peppers for "X"s and disks of pepperoni for "O"s. What dishes there are to please picky chaperones—poached salmon over a salad niçoise, say—are so wan that one envies the kids their mac and cheese. The Irish Girl pronounced the burgers "good," the curly fries "cool," and the chocolate mousse "delicious." As for the chicken tenders, she declared, "I've had better." Samantha had nothing to add. After a time, the Irish Girl said, "I so wanna get a doll." (Open daily for lunch and dinner. Prix fixe $18-$23.)

—*Nick Paumgarten*

LUIS GONZÁLEZ PALMA
Thorns, knives, and surrealistic chairs recur in these big (nearly three feet square), self-consciously beautiful, and mysterious images encased in resin. González Palma, a Guatemalan who now lives in Argentina, used high-contrast Kodalith film to photograph staged scenes. He then attached enlarged transparencies to gold leaf that had been mounted on red paper and painted over with a watery layer of bitumen. Brushstrokes and bits of red showing through the gold make for a luminous patina reminiscent of old Christian icons. Some of the images—like that of a shirtless man at a table in one panel of a diptych who sits opposite a skull wearing a cone-shaped hat—are reminiscent of Joel-Peter Witkin, but González Palma only flirts with the macabre. He deals in poetic allusion of the lyrical sort. Through July 2. (Robert Mann, 210 Eleventh Ave., at 25th St. 212-989-7600.)

TRENT PARKE
Shooting underwater, Parke and his partner, Narelle Autio, recast nature's balance in grainy black-and-white, with the roiling surf above acting as a stormy heaven and swimmers and surfers becoming odd, water-dwelling creatures in silhouette. A second series by Parke consists of ominous urban scenes in Australia. Through June 12. (Meyerowitz, 120 Eleventh Ave., at 20th St. 212-414-2770.)

CINDY SHERMAN
The artist as circus. Sherman's large new photographs of herself in crude clown costume and makeup, against digitally created backgrounds in trumpeting colors, stun at first glance. Then the work's transparent artifice—the costumes are thrown together, mere schmattes—and the richness of the artist's character-acting become clearer. Moping, simpering, and strutting, the fiercely individualized clowns gaze outward, but not at us. In worlds of their own, they are tatterdemalion gods and goddesses of full-throttle performance. If you think that these pictures aren't about you, you aren't thinking. Through June 26. (Metro Pictures, 519 W. 24th St. 212-206-7100.)

ANDY WARHOL
A series of Polaroids show a topless Paloma Picasso staring at the camera, sometimes with a strange paper construction covering her forehead and one eye; in another series, Mick Jagger's naked torso and outstretched arms recall the early work of Robert Mapplethorpe. But this is Warhol, working in the late sixties and early seventies. The photographs were pasted into eleven small red notebooks and are being exhibited for the first time. The bulk of what's on view is pictures of friends at play: Kennedy children at the beach, Marisa Berenson eating an ice-cream sundae, Brigid Berlin mugging in aviator goggles and a red caftan. The gallery and the German publisher Steidl produced a boxed catalogue that faithfully recaptures, picture by picture, the immediacy of Warhol's Polaroids. Through June 19. (Pace/MacGill, 32 E. 57th St. 212-759-7999.)

"OFF BROADWAY"
In a rented space across from the Gourmet Garage in SoHo, four intrepid young Magnum photographers—Thomas Dworzak, Alex Majoli, Paolo Pellegrin, and Ilkka Uimonen—have designed a show of their work from various wars and catastrophic social upheavals, including those in Iraq, Palestine, Afghanistan, Chechnya, Ethiopia, and Kosovo. Upstairs, the pictures are presented fairly straightforwardly. Downstairs, in a dark, brick-walled room, a soundtrack composed by Fabio Barovero, a founder of the band Mau Mau, accompanies a slide show of photographs projected onto a temporary cloth wall. Other black cloth walls form cubicles for mini slide shows, including one of Dworzak's pictures of sexually suggestive Taliban portraits, taken in Kandahar, some of which appeared in these pages during the recent war in Afghanistan. The Taliban portraits are in bright colors, but most of the work in the show is black-and-white, with no attribution or titles. The effect is dramatic and searing. Through May 30. (60 Mercer St. 212-929-6000.)

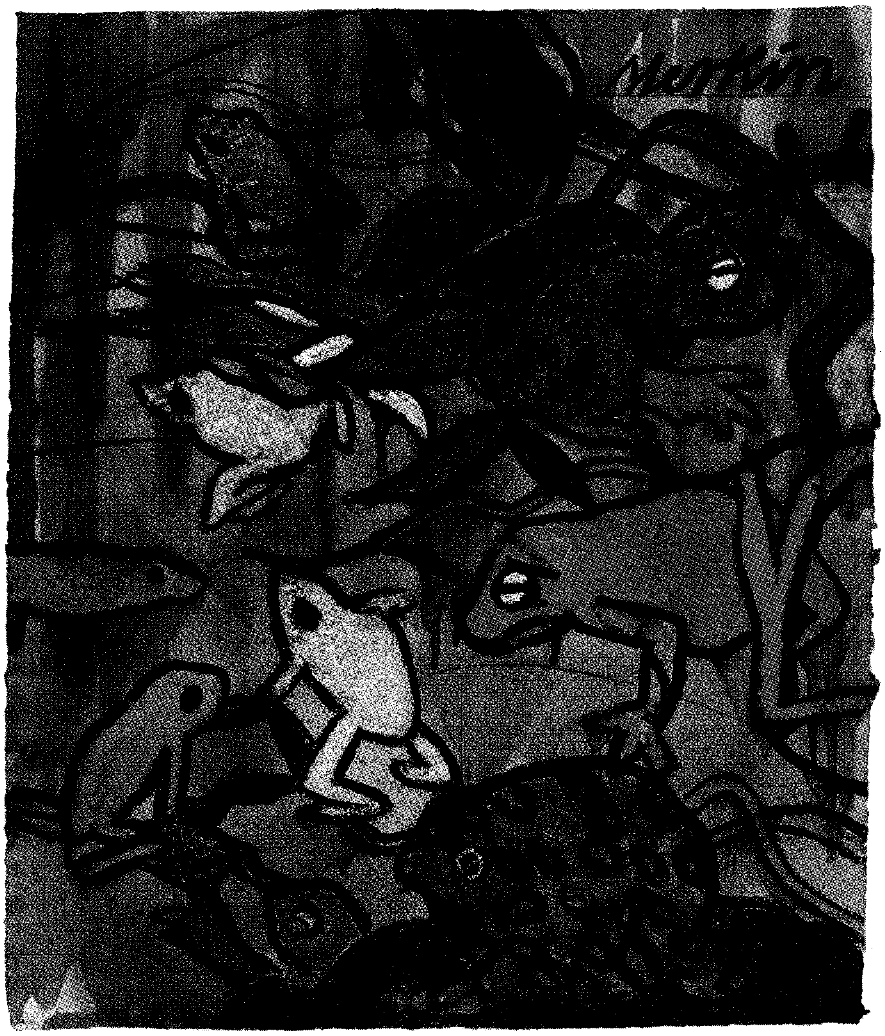
Short List

ANDREAS GURSKY
Matthew Marks, 522 W. 22nd St.
212-243-0200. Through June 27.

ROGER MAYNE
Gitterman, 170 E. 75th St. 212-734-0868.
Through June 5.

MARTIN PARR
Janet Borden, 560 Broadway. 212-431-0166.
Through May 28.

JEFF WALL
Marian Goodman, 24 W. 57th St.
212-977-7160. Through May 29.



"Frogs: A Chorus of Colors" opens May 29 at the American Museum of Natural History. More than two hundred frogs will be on view, including seventy-five dart-poison frogs in a hundred-and-ten-cubic-foot vivarium (see Art).

RICHARD MERKIN

AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES

SOTHEBY'S
May 26 at 7 and May 27 at 10:15 A.M.: Many of the nearly two hundred lots in this auction of Latin-American art exude a mystic, transcendent vitality. A typical example, the Chilean painter Claudio Bravo's "White Package," is as plain as it is complex: a seemingly realist rendering of an object wrapped in white paper bound with string upon closer inspection begins to evoke the nonfigurative abstraction of Rothko and Barnett Newman. "Nueva York Desde la Terraza" ("New York from the Terrace"), the Mexican painter Rufino Tamayo's daringly colored visual poem to a city that helped his art "acquire the sense of universality," seamlessly blends artistic experiment with personal feeling, another penchant of Latin-American art. In "Naturaleza Muerta," Fernando Botero's fruit is as voluptuous as his women. ♦ May 27 at 10:15 A.M.: This sale of Dutch, Italian, and French Old Masters includes several masterpieces distinguished by high-minded symbolism and allusions to political turmoil. In "The Bird Trap," Pieter Brueghel the Younger's view of carefree skaters sliding across fragile ice while birds circle above, equally oblivious to the trap that awaits them, possibly symbolized the Netherlands' tenuous fate under Spanish occupation in the sixteenth century. Henri-Pierre Danloux's "The Baron de Besenval in His 'Salon de Compagnie' " depicts the unfortunate commander of the Swiss Guards, who were responsible for maintaining allegiance to the French monarchy in the summer of 1789. Besenval survived that volatile year, but the pall of a passing era hangs gloomily over Danloux's portrait. ♦ May 27 at 2: This auction of British paintings examines two English obsessions: peerage and horses. Though most of the works feature nobility in various states of repose (Sir Joshua Reynolds's portrait of Henry Howard, Earl of Suffolk and Berkshire, and Andrea Soldi's painting of a British Levant Company trader in Ottoman dress stand out), the sale belongs to the quadrupeds. After decades of relative obscurity, Alfred J. Munnings, the greatest equestrian portraitist of his era (whose "The Red Prince Mare" brought a record $7.8 million two weeks ago), is enjoying a revival. Here, his "Autumn Sunshine" dapples a gray mare with the luminous colors of fall, while "The Afternoon Ride" sets the finely brushed features of Lady Violet Munnings and her horse Isaac against an Impressionistic background. (York Ave. at 72nd St. 212-606-7000.)

ANTIQUORUM
May 26 at 11 A.M.: The "Seabiscuit Watch," an eighteen-karat pink-gold timepiece given to the horse trainer Tom Smith by his employers Dan and Ada Rice, of Danada Farms (who hired him after his work with the celebrated horse during the Depression), is among the highlights of a sale of watches. (Grand Havana Room, 666 Fifth Ave., at 53rd St. 212-750-1103.)

DOYLE
May 26 at 1: An auction of American art work. (175 E. 87th St. 212-427-2730.)

SWANN
May 27 at 10:30 A.M.: A sale of books on gems and jewelry, with such treatises on the lapidary art as Georgius Agricola's "De Re Metallica." (104 E. 25th St. 212-254-4710.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC

OPERA

NEW YORK CITY OPERA: "VOX: SHOWCASING AMERICAN COMPOSERS"
May 26 at 2: The series' first afternoon of opera excerpts, presented in thirty-minute blocks, begins with two scenes from "Margaret Garner," a work by Richard Danielpour and Toni Morrison based on events in the life of the Medea-like slave who, after escaping from her plantation, sacrificed her three children rather than have them return to slavery. The performances continue with works by the young composers Daniel Felsenfeld and Adam Silverman and conclude with music from Elodie Lauten's "Waking in New York," a tribute to the life and work of her mentor Allen Ginsberg. The conductors include Lucy Arner, Gary Thor Wedow, and George Manahan. ♦ May 26 at 7:30 and May 27 at 6:30: The singers and players of the Music-Theatre Group offer two performances of "Fangs," the final installment of a trilogy on the African-American experience by the composer Diedre Murray and the poet Cornelius Eady (who were finalists for the Pulitzer Prize for Drama in 1999); Diane Paulus is the director. ♦ May 27 at 2: The final City Opera session begins with an excerpt from "The Reverend Jim Jones," by John Eaton, one of America's leading composers of experimental opera. It continues with works by the composer-librettists Jennifer Griffith and Tom Cipullo ("Glory Denied," based on the story of Col. Jim Thompson, the longest-held P.O.W. in Vietnam) and concludes with Donald Hagar's "Inspiration" (with a libretto by John Burns). ♦ May 27 at 7:30: The Center for Contemporary Opera presents "A More Perfect Union," a dance opera by the composer Victoria Bond, the choreographer Ruth Priscilla Kirstein, and the librettist Isaiah Sheffer that takes a satirical look at the Constitutional Convention of 1787. (Sharp Theatre and Thalia Theatre, Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. No tickets required. See This Week. ♦ Note: On May 27 at 12, Mark Adamo, City Opera's composer-in-residence, moderates a panel discussion on opera and politics that will include the composer John Corigliano.)

AMATO OPERA
Anthony Amato's feisty chamber-opera company presents its final production of the season, **"Lucia di Lammermoor."** (Amato Opera Theatre, 319 Bowery, at 2nd St. 212-228-8200. May 28-29 at 7:30 and May 30 at 2:30.)

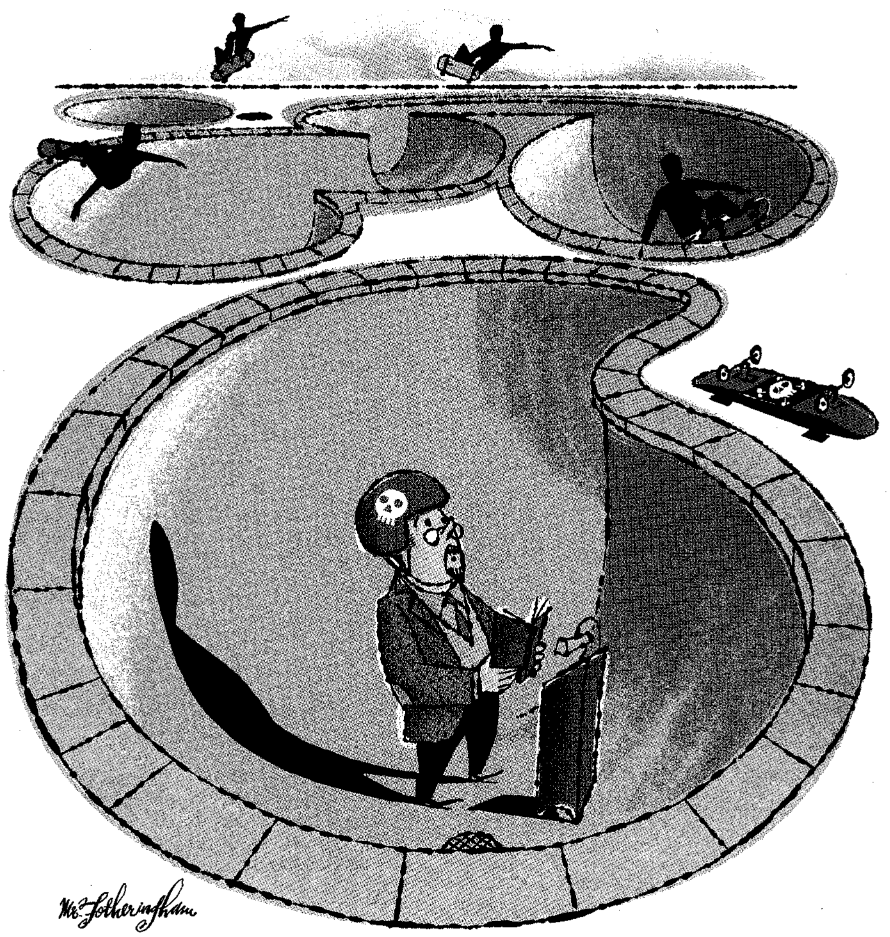
ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC: CHARLES IVES FESTIVAL
The Philharmonic—which helped launch the Ives craze when Leonard Bernstein premièred the Second Symphony in 1951—winds down its festival honoring the composer with a concert of masterworks. From Ives comes "Three Places in New England," the Great American Symphony in all but name; the finale, a wordless orchestral version of his song "The Housatonic at Stockbridge," is perhaps the most poignant music he ever wrote. Also on the program are Stravinsky's "Petrushka," a riot of color and energy, and Ravel's darkly eloquent Piano Concerto for the Left Hand (with Leon Fleisher). Lorin Maazel, who will no doubt revel in the technical demands of these scores, conducts. (Avery Fisher Hall. May 27 at 7:30 and May 28-29 at 8.) ♦ Maazel leads the Philharmonic's annual Memorial Day concert at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, a program of music by Wagner and Mussorgsky. (Amsterdam Ave. at 112th St. May 31 at 8. No tickets required.) (212-875-5656.)

NEW AMSTERDAM SINGERS: "THE POET DREAMS"
Clara Longstreth's excellent amateur chorus takes up a program of music that evokes the pleasures and dangers of sailing and flight, including works by Charles Ives ("Crossing the Bar"), Eric Whitacre ("Leonardo Dreams of His Flying Machine"), and Alexander Dmitriev ("The Ancient Mariner," a

setting of Coleridge's poem crafted in the idiosyncratic Russian form of the "choral concerto"). (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 212-501-3330. May 27 at 8.)

NEW YORK YOUTH SYMPHONY
This young-person's orchestra has always been considered one of the nation's best, but its next performance—Mahler's Symphony No. 5, conducted by Paul Haas—will be a mighty challenge. The extensive rehearsal time needed to mount this colossus will not, however, prevent it from fulfilling another of its prime missions, its "First Music" program of young-composer commissions, which was begun by the conductor David Alan Miller twenty years ago. In this concert the lucky composer is Jeff Myers, whose work "Regeneration" opens the program. (Carnegie Hall. 212-581-5933. May 30 at 2.)



Contributors to the new anthology "Life and Limb: Skateboarders Write from the Deep End" gather on May 29 for a reading at the Autumn Skate Bowl.

EDWIN FOTHERINGHAM

RECITALS

TODD REYNOLDS: "STILL LIFE WITH MICROPHONE 7.0"
"Still Life" is the ever-expanding "Leaves of Grass" of the Whitmanesque Todd Reynolds, New York's most versatile violinist (he's best known as a member of the Ethel string quartet) and a composer of bumptiously off-the-wall collaborative multimedia works. In this installment, subtitled "Stop.Time," the former Heifetz student performs on his "iFiddle," a conglomeration of hardware and software extensions to an amplified violin. A formidable squad of downtown luminaries, including the vocalist Theo Bleckmann and the clarinettist Michael Lowenstern, will join in. (Whitney Museum of American Art at Altria, 120 Park Ave., at 42nd St. May 26 at 8. No tickets required.)

BARGEMUSIC
May 27-28 at 7:30: Vera Beths, the latest bona-fide star to participate in Olga Bloom's floating chamber-music series, is one of Holland's most imaginative musicians, a violinist in the period-instrument band L'Archibudelli. Not that she feels bound to the Baroque. Her program, a collaboration with the violinist Colin Jacobsen and the violist Nicholas Cords (among others), begins with delicately pointed works by Boccherini and Cherubini, moves through Haydn's final, incomplete (and painfully impassioned) String Quartet, Op. 103, and concludes with Schoenberg's "Verklärte Nacht." ♦ May 29 at 7:30 and May 30 at 4: An all-Beethoven program (including the Trio in E-Flat Major, Op. 70, No. 2), offered by the violinist Mark Peskanov, the cellist Colin Carr, and the pianist Thomas Sauer. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 718-624-2083.)

COMPOSERS CONCORDANCE
In the final concert of its twentieth season, the collaborative offers a mess of works by such composers as Theodore Chanler (the "Five Songs," featuring the tenor Paul Sperry), Otto Luening ("Gargoyles," for violin and tape, an early classic of electronic music), John Eaton (the maverick Chicago master, enjoying quite a run in New York lately), Patrick Hardish, and Art Kreiger. The performers also include the cellist Jeffrey Shah and the soprano Helene Williams. (Frederick Loewe Theatre, New York University, 35 W. 4th St. May 27 at 8. Tickets at the door.)

RIVERSIDE OPERA ENSEMBLE
Hila Plitmann, the virtuosic Los Angeles soprano, is the star performer in the organization's twentieth-anniversary concert, an evening of world premières in which she'll join the composer-pianist David Del Tredici in the first performance of his cycle "On Wings of Song." Also featured are shorter works by Stephen Dembski, Nathan R. Matthews, Scott Gendel, and Patrick Byers, performed by the soprano Harolyn Blackwell, the tenor John Koch, and others. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 212-501-3330. May 29 at 8.)

"FREE FOR ALL AT TOWN HALL": ANDRÉ WATTS
The ambassadorial American pianist, known for his conservatism, here plays four movements from Ligeti's "Musica Ricercata" on a program that also includes music by Bach, Beethoven (the Sonata in D Major, Op. 10, No. 3), Bartók, and Liszt. (123 W. 43rd St. May 30 at 5. Free tickets, with a maximum of two per person, will be distributed beginning at noon on the day of the concert.)

FRIENDS & ENEMIES OF NEW MUSIC
John Link and Ben Yarmolinsky—two of the three composers who run this strenuously accessible new-music series—have programmed, alongside music of their own, works by the winners of the group's annual new-music competition—Peter Alexander and Aleksandra Vrebalov—as well as pieces by Steven Burke (one of this year's Rome Prize winners) and Gregg Wramage. (Elebash Auditorium, CUNY Graduate Center, Fifth Ave. at 34th St. June 1 at 8. Tickets at the door.)

ANDRÉ EMELIANOFF
The renowned New York cellist performs music by Janáček, Kurtág, and Brahms (the Sonata for Cello and Piano in F Major, Op. 99), along with world premières by Nora Kroll-Rosenbaum ("Vis à Vis," an homage to Schumann) and Martin Bresnick ("Ballade," an homage to Brahms). Thomas Hoppe accompanies him. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 212-501-3330. June 1 at 8.)

OUT OF TOWN

"CLOSE ENCOUNTERS WITH MUSIC"
The summer season at Tanglewood's Ozawa Hall starts a little early with a presentation of "The Gilded Age: From Rags to Riches," a program of works by Dvořák, Tchaikovsky, and Scott Joplin performed by the violist Yehonatan Berick, the soprano Amy Burton, and the cellist Yehuda Hanani (among others), woven together by readings from Wharton and James offered by the evening's special guest, the actor Richard Chamberlain. (Lenox, Mass. 800-843-0778. May 29 at 6.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

"LIFE AND LIMB"
In skateboarding, a sport for outsiders and misfits, for those who haven't grown up or who are lucky enough not to have ever grown up, authenticity is the coin of the realm. "Life and Limb," a new anthology published by Brooklyn's own Soft Skull Press, is as authentic as they come—all the pieces were written by folks who have spent more time on a board than might be considered healthy. On May 29 at 9, Justin Hocking, Jocko Weyland, Jared Jacang Maher, Sharon Harrison, and other contributors celebrate its publication with a reading and party at the Autumn Skate Bowl, in Greenpoint, Brooklyn, where they'll be joined by the Boxes, an all-girl punk band, and some of the city's top skaters. (73 West St., between Noble and Milton Sts., Brooklyn. For more information, call 212-677-6220.)

MORE READINGS
May 27 at 7:30: The *New Yorker* writer James Surowiecki reads from his new book, "The Wisdom of Crowds." (Barnes & Noble, Sixth Ave. at 21st St. No tickets necessary.) ♦ May 28 at 7: The novelists Catherine Texier and Liz Brown read from their work. (National Arts Club, 15 Gramercy Park S. No tickets necessary.)

TALK
May 26 at 6: Bob Kerrey, the president of the New School, talks with Michael Kranish, Brian C. Mooney, and Nina J. Easton about their contribution to the 2004 Presidential election, "John F. Kerry: The Complete Biography." (New School, 66 W. 12th St. 212-229-5747.)

WALK
May 31 at 1: Big Onion Walking Tours offers a Memorial Day stroll through historic lower Manhattan. (For more information, call 212-439-1090.)

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OPENING

ADORED: DIARY OF A MALE PORN STAR
A drama about a gay adult-film actor coping with the death of his father. Written and directed by and starring Marco Filiberti. In Italian. Opening May 28. (Cinema Village.)

BAADASSSSS!
Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. Opening May 28. (Empire 25, 64th and 2nd, and Union Square.)

THE DAY AFTER TOMORROW
Roland Emmerich directed this disaster movie, in which global warming has destroyed the Earth's climate. With Dennis Quaid, Jake Gyllenhaal, and Emmy Rossum. Opening May 28.

THE FIVE OBSTRUCTIONS
Lars von Trier and Jorgen Leth co-directed this film, in which von Trier compels Leth to reshoot his 1967 short "The Perfect Human" under various limitations of von Trier's devising. In Danish, English, French, and Spanish. Opening May 26. (Film Forum.)

THE MOTHER
A recently widowed grandmother (Anne Reid) falls in love with a much younger man (Daniel Craig) who is renovating her son's London house. Directed by Roger Michell; written by Hanif Kureishi. Opening May 28. (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Sunshine Cinema.)

RAISING HELEN
After a family tragedy, a Manhattan socialite (Kate Hudson) takes over the care of her sister's three children, in a romantic comedy directed by Garry Marshall. With Joan Cusack, John Corbett, and Helen Mirren. Opening May 28.

SAVED!
Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. Opening May 28.

SOUL PLANE
A comedy about a black-owned, hip-hop airline. The cast includes Kevin Hart, Snoop Dogg, Method Man, Tom Arnold, and K. D. Aubert. Directed by Jessy Terrero. Opening May 28.

WAKE
Henry LeRoy Finch's début drama, set in Maine, tells the story of four brothers who reunite when their mother becomes ill. With Gale Harold, Blake Gibbons, and Martin Landau. Opening May 28. (Quad Cinema.)

FILM NOTES

THE BOY WITH GREEN HAIR
It never made the leap into cult status, but probably no child who saw this Joseph Losey oddity from 1948 has ever forgotten it. Dean Stockwell plays a war orphan who wakes up one morning with green hair—an inexplicable occurrence that catalyzes all the fear and the suspicions that otherwise neighborly Americans hold about displaced people and aliens and outsiders in general. Some of the vignettes about small-town paranoia and bullying have a terrible power, and the combination of eerieness and earnestness can be haunting, especially when sad-eyed poster children come to life and urge the boy to proselytize for pacifism. Stockwell's troubled yet enchanted presence fits the movie's theme song, "Nature Boy," better than Ewan McGregor's romanticism did when Baz Luhrmann revived the tune for "Moulin Rouge."—*Michael Sragow* (Walter Reade Theatre; May 27 and May 30.)

COFFEE AND CIGARETTES
Cinematic doodles from the writer-director Jim Jarmusch. The movie, seventeen years in the making, consists of a series of black-and-white vignettes involving caffeine and nicotine. While those two substances complement each other, Jarmusch, ever the hip mad scientist, throws together odd combinations of actors and singers. Some pairings—like the laconic comic Steven Wright and the Italian yo-yo Roberto Benigni—turn out to be duds, but other encounters—like the one between the hip-hoppers the RZA and the GZA and a woozy Bill Murray—have a singular, irreproducible chemistry. Jarmusch doesn't have any grand theme; he's just playing around. Steve Coogan (of "24 Hour Party People" fame) and Alfred Molina parody the awkward Hollywood meeting of a rising star and a fading veteran. Best of all is Cate Blanchett, who, thanks to camera trickery, plays both halves of a conversation between a starlet and her resentful, bohemian cousin—she alternates between the slatternly and the prim with only a wig and body language. Finally, the former Warhol associate Taylor Mead gives the film a wonderful valedictory moment when he mysteriously hears Mahler's "I Have Lost Track of the World."—*Michael Agger* (BAM Rose Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, and Sunshine Cinema.)

ETERNAL SUNSHINE OF THE SPOTLESS MIND
Yes, it's another attempt by the screenwriter Charlie Kaufman to replace the antique notion of cinema as persuasive entertainment with that of cinema as some strange, whirring device for the disorientation of the human brain. Jim Carrey plays Joel and Kate Winslet plays Clementine, who fall in love and out of love and back in love again. Fair enough, but Kaufman and the director, Michel Gondry, run the whole story in rewind, as if to prove the Shakespearean theorem that journeys end in lovers' meeting. Just to complicate the issue, Tom Wilkinson plays a dodgy doctor who can, for a fee, wipe the memory of a chosen individual, adored or otherwise, from your mind—a treatment of which both Joel and Clementine avail themselves. The conceit writhes with implausibility, yet it also gives off flashes of high-tech, low-down beauty, as scenes of tenderness begin to go grievously blank before the sweethearts' eyes. Carrey's latest effort to elude, or at least refine, his loony persona is more sincere than convincing, and it is left to Winslet, at once fierce and footloose, to carry the show. On the eighth viewing, say, the damn thing might even make sense. With Mark Ruffalo, Elijah Wood, and a blissed-out Kirsten Dunst—what is she on?—*Anthony Lane* (Reviewed in our issue of 3/22/04.) (Chelsea West, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Sutton 1 and 2, and Union Square.)

GOOD BYE, LENIN!
Christiane (Katrin Sass), a saintly East German Communist, falls into a coma just before the Berlin Wall comes down, in 1989. When she awakens, her son, Alex (Daniel Brühl), creates a kind of ersatz reality for her—a living museum of Communism—in which nothing has changed. He gets his cranky sister and a group of embarrassed neighbors to take part in the charade, going so far as to work with a filmmaker buddy on fake news broadcasts about the unending triumphs of a regime that no longer exists. This social satire was directed by Wolfgang Becker, whose background is in TV, and the movie often plays like a series of television-comedy skits, some of them funny and incisive, some larkish and insubstantial. Yet beneath the slapstick surface lies a sombre German heart: the point of the fable is that Communism in Germany was always an ersatz reality—that for forty years Party leaders were creating a large-scale version of the fiction that Alex creates in his mother's bedroom. In German.—*David Denby* (3/8/04) (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Village East Cinemas.)

I'M NOT SCARED
A stirring and beautifully made poetic thriller about the natural gallantry of a young boy. Michele (Giuseppe Cristiano), a frisky ten-year-old, is spending a carefree summer in the golden wheat fields of southern Italy when he finds something unaccountable—a tiny, pale creature kept captive in a pit near an abandoned farmhouse. He forms a bond with this ghost, who turns out to be a boy his own age, and decides to feed him and take him out for air. At the same time, Michele tries to penetrate the mysterious goings on at his house, where the adults, including the violent roughnecks his father brings home, quarrel viciously. Like René Clément's classic "Forbidden Games," the movie reveals the sordid behavior of adults as seen through the eyes of half-comprehending but pure-hearted children. The style is at times startlingly freewheeling, as if the events emerged from a child's dream, a storybook world of monsters and rescuers. Adapted by Niccolò Ammaniti and Francesca Marciano from Ammaniti's novel. Directed by Gabriele Salvatores; cinematography by Italo Petriccione. In Italian.—*D.D.* (4/12/04) (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

KILL BILL VOL. 2
If the two parts of Quentin Tarantino's movie are ever spliced together, the combined version may work as a kind of gleaming, wafer-thin pop epic. But this film, taken alone, is a shapeless mess, despite its redundant framing device. The Bride (Uma Thurman) continues her revenge from "Vol. 1" against the old friends who did her dirt, the Deadly Viper Assassination Squad (DiVAS). None of it makes much sense (nor is it supposed to)—characters are introduced only to be murdered or dropped, and the visual style alludes promiscuously to martial-arts classics and Sergio Leone's spaghetti Westerns. If the violence of the first film was a fountains-of-blood spectacle, the violence of this movie is in the taunting, heavy-menace style of old comic books and B movies. What's most shocking about these scenes is not the heartlessness but how bad Tarantino's ear has become. The man who seemed to reinvent writing for the screen in "Pulp Fiction"—pop-surreal, nasty, and blazingly funny—has settled into a pseudo-suave idiom. With Michael Madsen, Darryl Hannah in an eye patch, Gordon Liu in a cotton-candy beard as a supercilious mountaintop kung-fu master, and David Carradine as Bill, who, confronted at last, turns out to be a sonorous bore with tired eyes.—*D.D.* (4/19 & 26/04) (Battery Park 11, Cinema 3rd Avenue, East 86th Street Cinemas, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, 34th Street Theatre, and Village Theatre VII.)

M
With David Wayne never taking charge of the psychopathic role that made Peter Lorre a legend, Joseph Losey's frame-by-frame 1951 remake of Fritz Lang's 1931 classic about the hunt for a child killer is as bizarre and unrewarding as Gus Van Sant's remake of Hitchcock's "Psycho." Apart from the transfer of the action to California, Losey's only changes come in grimy embellishments, like having the murderer collect the tiny footwear of his victims, or in odd substitutions, like having a crew of juvenile delinquents take the place of the complex Berlin underworld that chased Lorre down. Instead of imposing a formal, unifying style the way Lang did, Losey lets some of his actors run amok, especially Luther Adler as the killer's self-loathing lawyer. His apology for his own misspent life overshadows his client's mea culpa and ruins what in Lang's original was one of the great cries from the heart in movie history.—*M.S.* (Walter Reade Theatre; May 27 and May 29.)

MAN ON FIRE
Lurid, blood-soaked, operatic junk. Denzel Washington plays a burned-out government assassin hired to protect a rich businessman's daughter (Dakota Fanning) in Mexico City. The first half of this overlong film deals with the bond that quietly develops between the two, the second with the inevitable kidnapping, which sends Washington on a torrid revenge streak. The director Tony Scott's overblown style is in full flower: the jittery camera and disjointed editing combine to create exquisite audience torture.—*Bruce Diones* (Battery Park 11, Chelsea West, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 64th and 2nd, 34th Street Theatre, and Union Square.)

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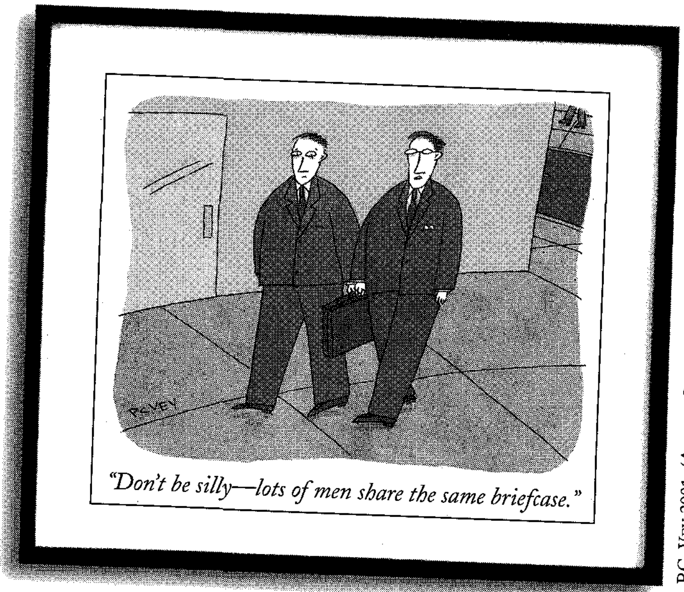

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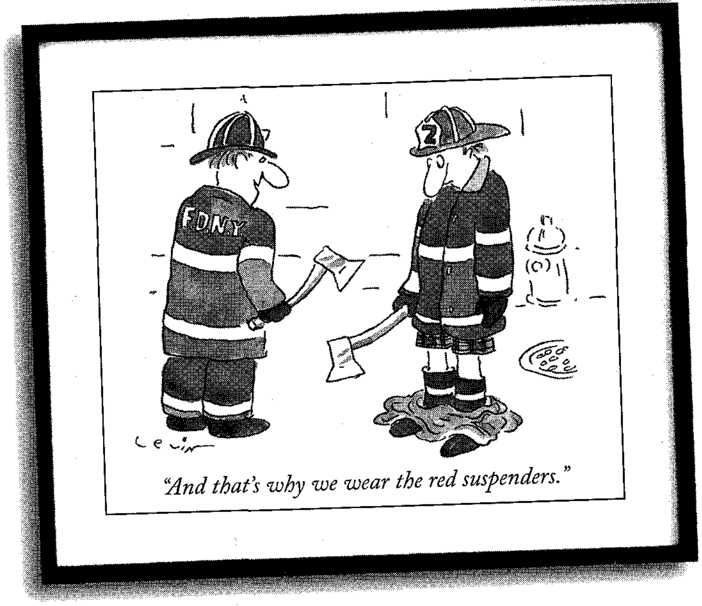

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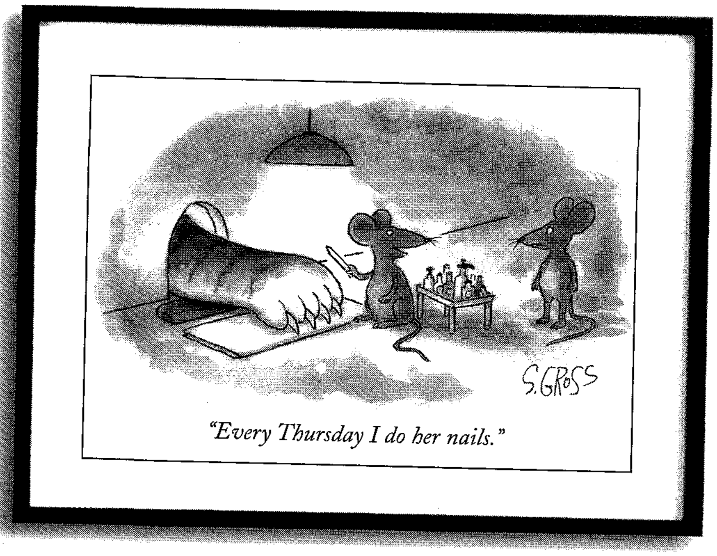

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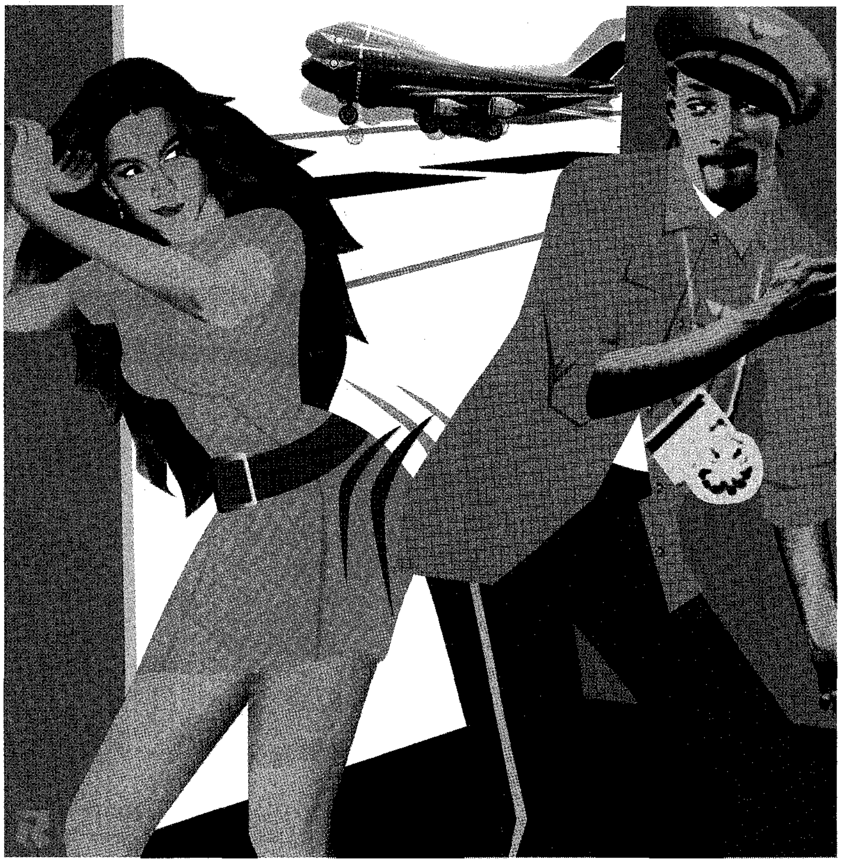
MEAN GIRLS

A new term at high school is even more of a trauma for Cady (Lindsay Lohan) than it is for everybody else, since she is not just an out-of-towner but an out-of-Africa, her parents having raised her as a bush baby. Now she is confronted with the complexity of school loyalties and fads, which—as we are reminded by innumerable slo-mo sequences with an added roartrack—are twice as bloodlusty as the lives of African fauna. Her first friends are Janis (Lizzy Caplan) and Damian (Daniel Franzese), who dare her to hang out with the second wave—a trio of acid beauties, led by the queenly Regina (Rachel McAdams). The twist is that Cady, in pretending to fall for their spoilt ways, really does fall for them, and the problem is that we ourselves never fall for this notion of Cady as weak-willed. Though the movie sags in the second half, your spirits are kept up by the steady flow of slashing lines—courtesy of Tina Fey, who not only wrote the script but also stars as Cady's teacher. If anything, the grownups—especially the school principal, played by Tim Meadows, of whom the picture needs much more—tend to nudge these pushy teen-agers into the wings. The movie, produced by Lorne Michaels and directed by Mark Waters, is often funny, but it was conceived by people who are plainly wiser and more worldly than their target audience, and there's something about that discrepancy that, you know, totally sucks.—*A.L.* (5/10/04) (Battery Park 11, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, New York Twin, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Theatre, and Village Theatre VII.)



Sophia Vergara and Snoop Dogg in the comedy "Soul Plane," opening May 28.

MONTY PYTHON'S LIFE OF BRIAN

It's been twenty-five years since believers everywhere got steamed up by this slice of Python mischief, and the joke—to nobody's surprise—is now firmly on them. In retrospect, this reputedly scurrilous work, aflame with heresy, turns out to be a bundle of schoolboyish jokes, many on the gentle side, and all of them scornful of political and religious excess. Graham Chapman, almost milky in his geniality, plays Brian, who is born down the street from Jesus Christ—so close that the Magi, uncertain about the exact stable over which the star has paused, offer gifts to the wrong babe, then grab them back again. As an adult, Brian becomes a highly reluctant prophet, only to be crucified for his insignificant sins. Most of the lead roles are taken by Python regulars such as John Cleese, Michael Palin, and Terry Jones (who somehow found time, while playing Brian's hag of a mother, to direct the movie as well). Rest assured that the film is not being reissued solely in order to celebrate its birthday. To put the matter in Pythonspeak: Nudge, nudge, Mel Gibson, say no more.—*A.L.* (5/3/04) (Sunshine Cinema.)

THE SADDEST MUSIC IN THE WORLD

Another straightforward slice of corporate entertainment from Guy Maddin. Actually, by his standards this new picture really is close to intelligible. Isabella Rossellini, sporting a wig that appears to have been woven from cold egg noodles, plays Lady Port-Huntly, rich but legless, who runs a competition to discover, as the title suggests, the saddest music in the world. One of her former lovers (Mark McKinney) offers to represent America; he also has a drunken father (David Fox) and a pixielike girlfriend (Maria de Medeiros) who is both amnesiac and nymphomaniac—a far from impractical arrangement, when you consider it. The movie, set in Winnipeg in 1933, is shot with Maddin's habitual blend of jumpiness, spookiness, halation, and archaic levels of scratch and grain. The result does not so much flirt with the ridiculous as lie back and let the ridiculous do more or less what it wants, and Maddin aficionados will ask for nothing more. Once again, however, the unconverted may wonder what the fuss is about; when a director's storytelling is as overheated as this, why should the stories themselves have to be so wildly undercooked?—*A.L.* (5/10/04) (First & 62nd Cinemas, 62nd & Broadway, and Sunshine Cinema.)

SHREK 2

The happily ogred couple of Shrek (Mike Myers) and Princess Fiona (Cameron Diaz) visit Fiona's disapproving parents, King Harold (John Cleese) and Queen Lillian (Julie Andrews), and get assaulted at the palace by an aerial Fairy Godmother (Jennifer Saunders) who has some sort of crooked deal going with the king whereby her son, Prince Charming (Rupert Everett), gets to marry Fiona. Or something like that. Will Shrek and Fiona be tempted into human beauty and give up their natural state of ogretude? Will Donkey (Eddie Murphy) and Puss-in-Boots (Antonio Banderas), a duelling cat, help them retain their honor and beautiful green complexion? The movie is obvious, but consistently entertaining and animated in DreamWorks's "realistic" digitized style. Directed by Andrew Adamson, Kelly Asbury, and Conrad Vernon; written by J. David Stem, Joe Stillman, and David N. Weiss, who adapted, from a great distance, characters originally created by William Steig.—*D.D.* (Astor Plaza, Battery Park 11, Beekman, Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, First & 62nd Cinemas, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Theatre, and Union Square.)

SMILES OF A SUMMER NIGHT

Ingmar Bergman achieves one of the few classics of carnal comedy: a tragicomic chase and roundelay that raises boudoir farce to elegance and lyric poetry. This 1955 film is the culmination of Bergman's "rose" style; as writer and director, he ties up his persistent, early battle-of-the-sexes themes in an intricate plot structure. And in this fin-de-siècle houseparty setting, with its soft light, its delicate, perfumed atmosphere, and its golden pavilion, the women are all beautiful and the epigrams shine. The film becomes an elegy to transient love; a gust of wind, and the whole vision may drift away. As the hostess, the stage actress trying to win back the lawyer she loves, there is the great Eva Dahlbeck (in one inspired, suspended moment she sings "Freut Euch des Lebens"). Ulla Jacobsson is the lawyer's virgin wife; Harriet Andersson, a blonde here but as opulent and sensuous as in her earlier roles, is the impudent, love-loving maid; Margit Carlquist is the proud, unhappy countess. Gunnar Björnstrand is the lawyer, Björn Bjelvenstam is his son, Jarl Kulle is the strutting count, and Naima Wifstrand is the actress's aged mother, who is carried about for her game of croquet. In Swedish.—*Pauline Kael* (Film Forum; May 28-30.)

SPRING, SUMMER, FALL, WINTER . . . AND SPRING

A Buddhist monk (Oh Young-soo) and his disciple, a young boy, live in an enchanted setting—a temple set at the center of a very still lake high in the mountains of Korea. The boy grows up, makes mistakes, and receives punishment from his master, but all is calm and orderly until a young woman enters the scene—a disruption that leads to violence and, eventually, to renewal. Kim Ki-duk's movie has a formal grace that is nearly intoxicating: the cinematography revels in the exquisite quiet of the lake, with its natural abundance rendered in a palette of infinitely subtle grays and pale blues. The formal perfection makes one willing to overlook an implicitly priggish rejection of sexuality and the normal glories and temptations of the world outside. And the movie's piety is redeemed by a vagrant and rather subversive sense of humor that keeps the rituals of Buddhist discipline fresh and humanly appealing. In Korean.—*D.D.* (Angelika Film Center, BAM Rose Cinemas, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

SUPER SIZE ME

Fascinating and nauseating. As a life-style stunt, the documentary filmmaker Morgan Spurlock eats only at McDonald's for thirty days. It's not a happy set of meals: he puts on twenty pounds, develops heart palpitations, and is rendered impotent (much to the smirking dismay of his vegan girlfriend). While even "heavy users" of McDonald's don't eat fast food as often as Spurlock does during the experiment, he becomes an overweight case in point that Big Macs and their brethren have contributed to the supersizing and the deteriorating health of Americans. Obesity now ranks second to smoking as a cause of preventable death. Even more worrying are Spurlock's forays into school cafeterias, which have become nutritional wastelands. He tells this toxic story with visual flair and the statistical punch of an inspired muckraker. And, if you want to eat something after the movie, be sure to look away during the shots of stomach-reducing surgery.—*M.A.* (Angelika Film Center, BAM Rose Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, Empire 25, Lincoln Square, and 72nd Street East.)

TROY

Adapting Homer's mighty Iliad into a two-and-a-half-hour spectacle, the writer David Benioff and the director Wolfgang Petersen compressed events, removed the mischievous gods, and turned the leg-

JOHN RITTER

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ends into a comprehensible political struggle. Agamemnon (Brian Cox), the chief of the Greek expedition, uses the loss of Helen to the Trojans as an excuse to conquer the eastern Aegean. The battles in front of the walls of Troy are cataclysmic and frightening, and the duels are fought out in the open, in clear space. You can tell, as at a championship boxing match, what's at stake in turning left rather than right, feinting rather than thrusting. Surrounded by an expert cast of international actors, Brad Pitt, as Achilles, tries and fails to speak in some classy mid-Atlantic accent, but he's fast as lightning in his movements. Eric Bana, as the Trojan Hector, is slower as a fighter, more dogged and earth-bound, but he makes a fine reluctant warrior. The ladies do not distinguish themselves, and James Horner's music—wordless wailing women, hollow pounding drums—comes off as an ominous cliché. With Peter O'Toole as Priam and Orlando Bloom as Paris. Cinematography by Roger Pratt. Shot in Malta and Mexico.—*D.D.* (5/17/04) (Battery Park 11, East 86th Street Cinemas, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Metro Twin, 19th Street East 6, 64th and 2nd, 34th Street Theatre, and Village Theatre VII.)

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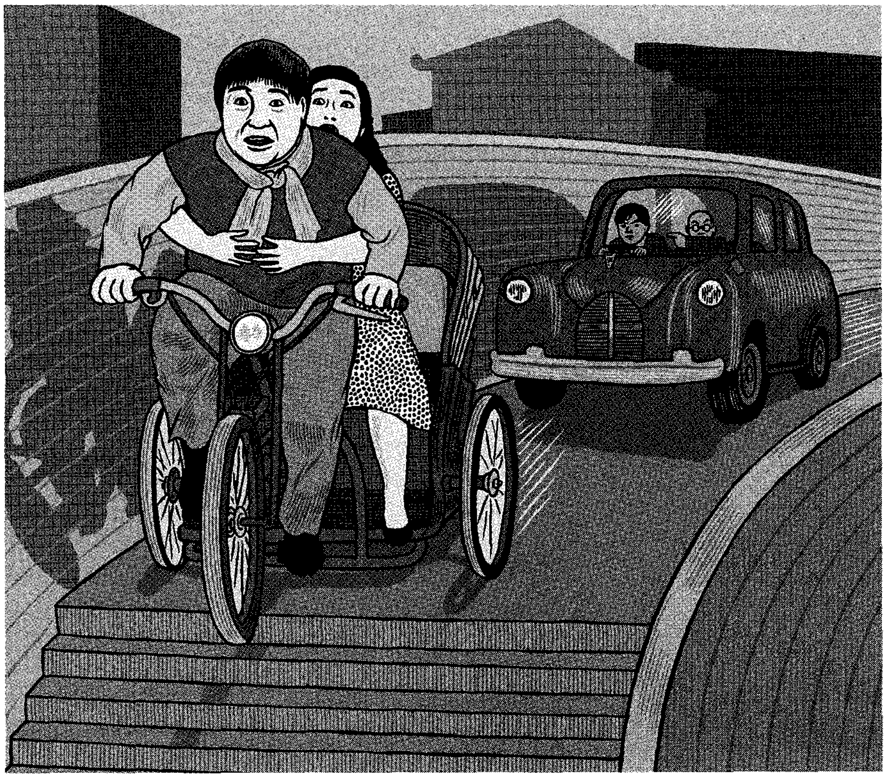

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Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE
35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—World-cinema Fridays. May 28 at 7:30: "Kandukondain, Kandukondain" (2000, Rajiv Menon; in Tamil and English). ♦ Starting May 29: A Cary Grant retrospective. This weekend, all of the films are directed by Howard Hawks. May 29 at 2: "Only Angels Have Wings" (1939). ♦ May 29 at 4:30: "His Girl Friday" (1940). ♦ May 29-30 at 6:30: "Bringing Up Baby" (1938). ♦ May 30 at 2: "I Was a Male War Bride" (1949). ♦ May 30 at 4: "Monkey Business" (1952).

ANTHOLOGY FILM ARCHIVES
32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (212-505-5110)—May 27-28 at 7 and 9:30; May 29 at 4:30, 7, and 9:30; and May 30 at 6 and 8:30: "My Architect" (2003, Nathaniel Kahn). ♦ Films presented by the Subway Cinema collective. May 30 at 4: "Pedicab Driver" (1986, Sammo Hung; in Cantonese). ♦ Essential cinema. May 30 at 5: "Gertrud" (1965, Carl Th. Dreyer; in Danish).

BAM ROSE CINEMAS
30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-777-3456)—Gay and lesbian films. May 26 at 4:30 and 6:45: "Before Stonewall" (1984, John Scagliotti and Greta Schiller). ♦ May 26 at 9: "After Stonewall" (1999, Scagliotti, Janet Baus, and Dan Hunt). ♦ Haitian films. May 27 at 9: "I Love You Anne" (2002, Richard Senecal). ♦ May 28 at 5 and 8: "Barikad" (2002, Senecal). ♦ African-themed cinema. May 29-31 at 2: "Cosmic Africa" (2003, Craig and Damon Foster). ♦ May 29-31 at 4:30: "The Legend of the Sky Kingdom" (2003, Roger Hawkins). ♦ May 29 at 6:45: "Kuxa Kanema" (2003, Margarita Cardoso). ♦ May 29 at 9: "The Deadline" (1996, David Jammy). ♦ May 30 at 6:45: "Africanized" (2002, Theo Eshetu). ♦ May 30 at 9: "Dance Black America" (1984, D. A. Pennebaker and Chris Hegedus). ♦ May 31 at 6:45 and 9: "Everyday People" (2004, Jim McKay). ♦ Through June 30: The *Village Voice* film series. June 1 at 4:30, 6:45, and 9: "Koktebel" (2003, Boris Khlebnikov and Aleksie Popogrebsky; in Russian).

FILM FORUM
W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (212-727-8110)—Through July 1: An Ingmar Bergman retrospective. All films are in Swedish. May 26-27 at 1, 4:40, and 8:20: "Fanny and Alexander" (1982). ♦ May 28-30 at 1, 3:10, 5:15, 7:30, and 8:45: "Smiles of a Summer Night" (†). ♦ May 31 at 1:10, 3:15, 5:20, 7:30, and 9:30 and June 1 at 1:10, 3:15, and 5:20: "The Passion of Anna" (1969). ♦ June 1 at 7:30: "Frenzy" (1945, Alf Sjöberg; written by Bergman). ♦ June 1 at 9:30: "Crisis" (1946).

FLORENCE GOULD HALL
55 E. 59th St. (212-355-6160)—Through June 22: "Nouveaux Cinéastes: New Filmmakers." June 1 at 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, and 9: "Se Souvenir de Belles Choses" (2001, Zabou Breitman; in French).

SUNSHINE CINEMA
143 E. Houston St. (212-330-8182)—Midnight movies. May 28-30: "Forbidden Zone" (1980, Richard Elfman).

THALIA THEATRE
Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. (212-864-5400)—May 29-30 at 2 and 6:30: "The Triplets of Belleville" (2003, Sylvain Chomet; in French). ♦ May 29-30 at 4 and 8:30: "The Fog of War" (2003, Errol Morris).

WALTER READE THEATRE
Lincoln Center (212-875-5600)—Through May 31: "Stranger on the Prowl: The Films of Joseph Losey." May 25 at 3 and May 30 at 4 and 8:45: "Mr. Klein" (1976). ♦ May 26 at 1, May 28 at 8:30, and May 31 at 8:30: "Boom!" (1968). ♦ May 26 at 3:15, May 29 at 7:30, and May 30 at 6:30: "Secret Ceremony" (1968). ♦ May 27 at 7:30 and May 30 at 2: "The Boy with Green Hair" (†). ♦ May 27 at 9:30 and May 29 at 2 and 9:40: "M" (†). ♦ May 28 at 3 and May 29 at 4: "Don Giovanni" (1980). ♦ May 28 at 6:30: "Time Without Pity" (1957). ♦ May 31 at 1 and 6:15: "The Servant" (1963). ♦ May 31 at 3:15: "Galileo" (1975). ♦ Starting June 1: "Open Roads: New Italian Cinema." June 1 at 2 and 6:30: "La Destinazione" (2003, Piero Sanna). ♦ June 1 at 4:30: "The Miracle" (2003, Edoardo Winspeare). ♦ June 1 at 9: "Don't Move" (2004, Sergio Castellitto).

MICHAEL KUPPERMAN

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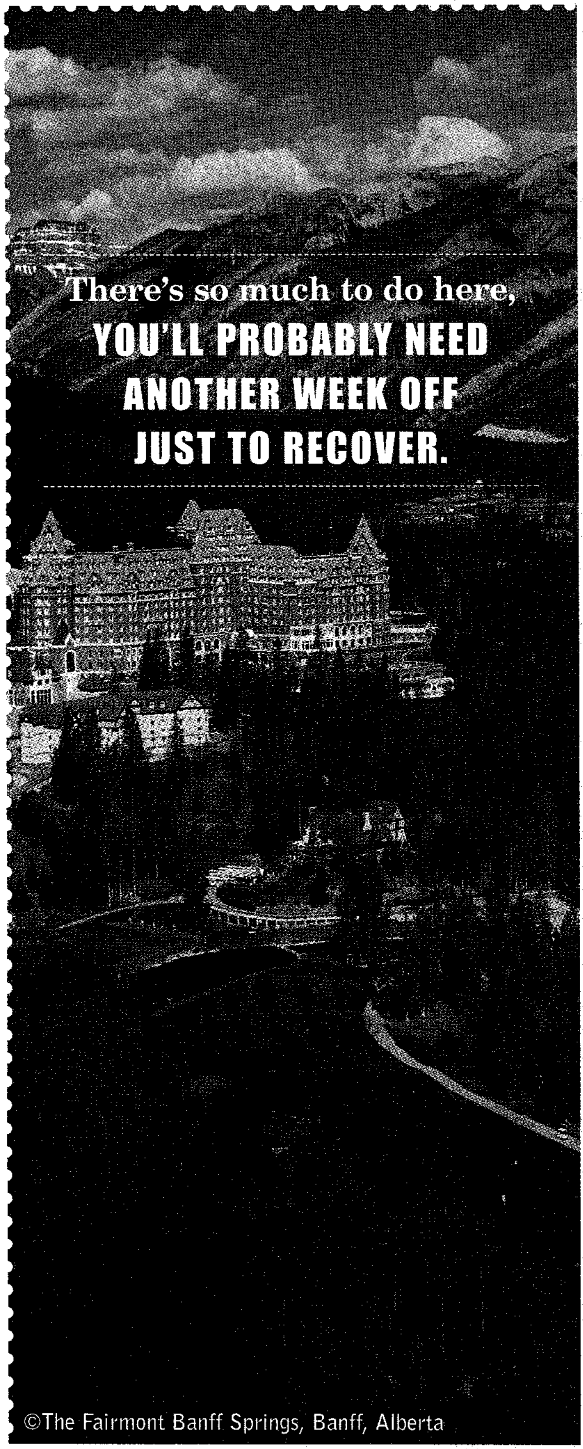
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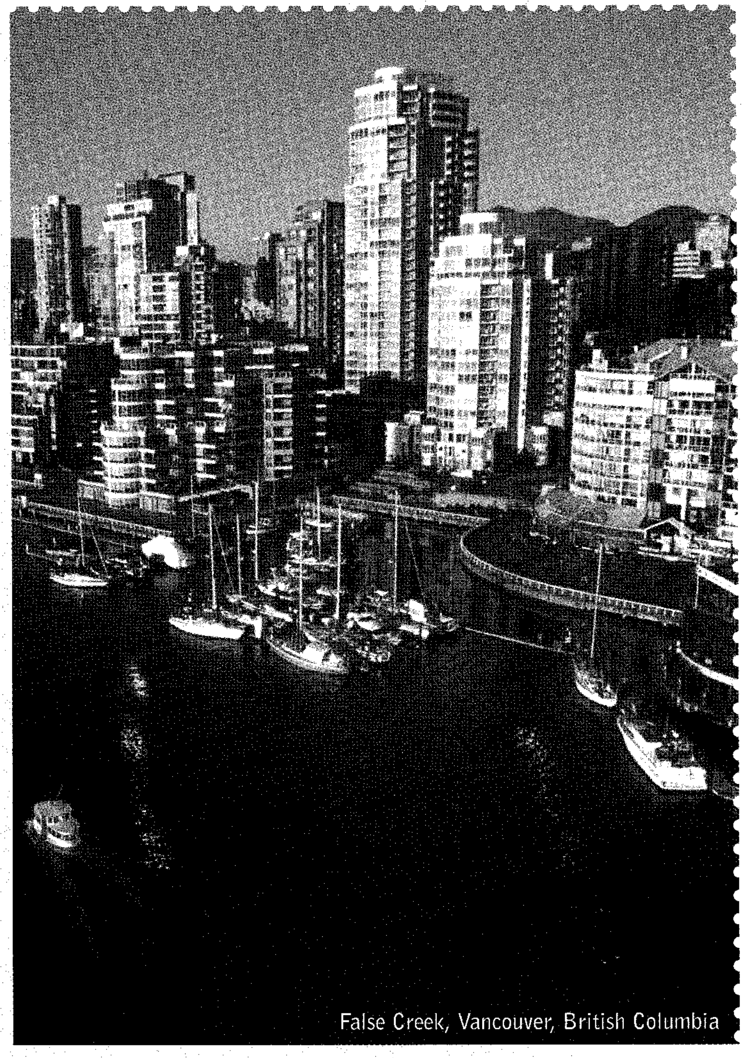
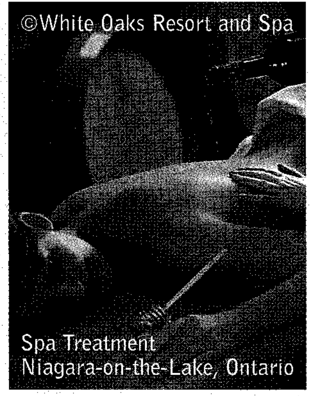


False Creek, Vancouver, British Columbia



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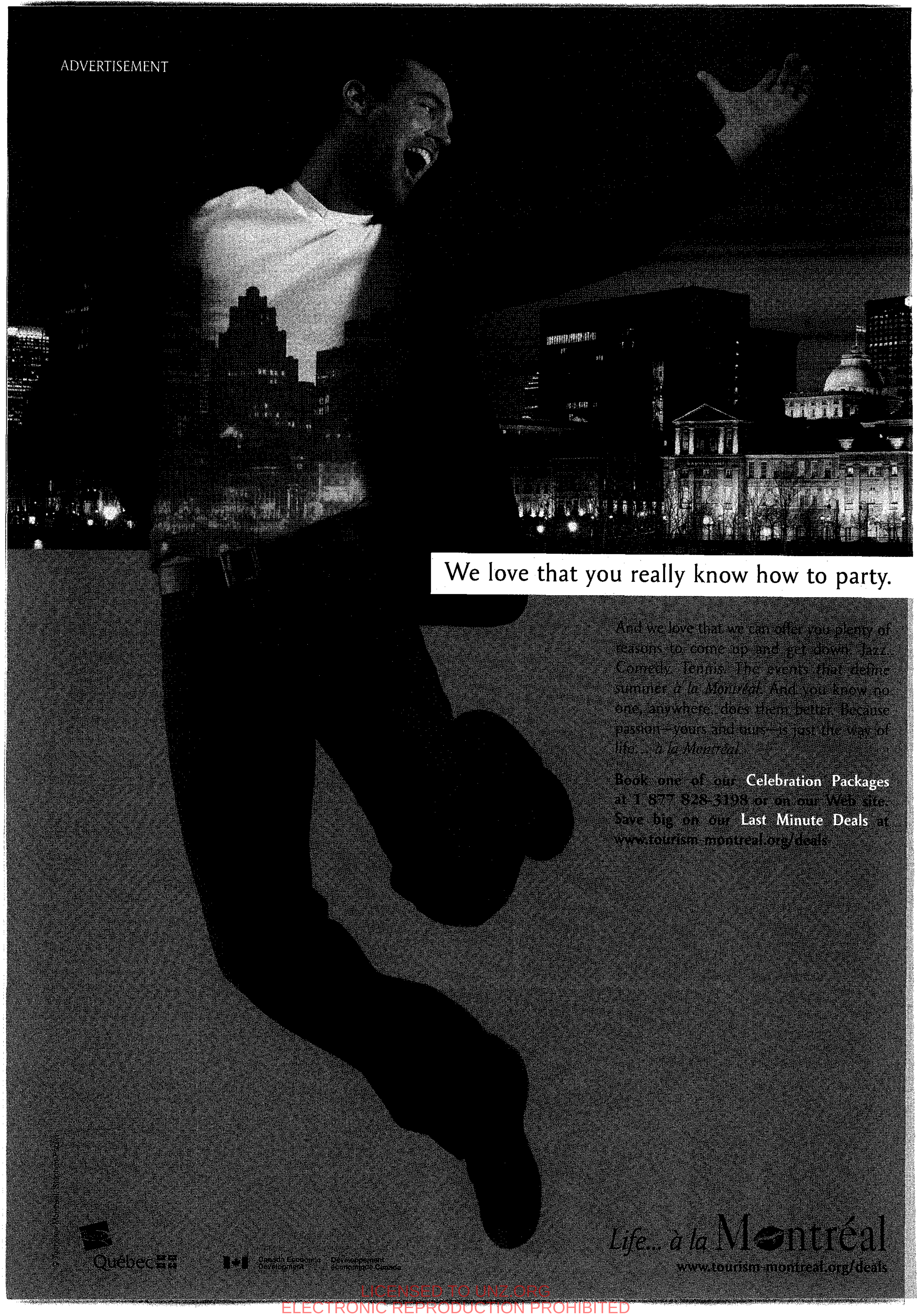

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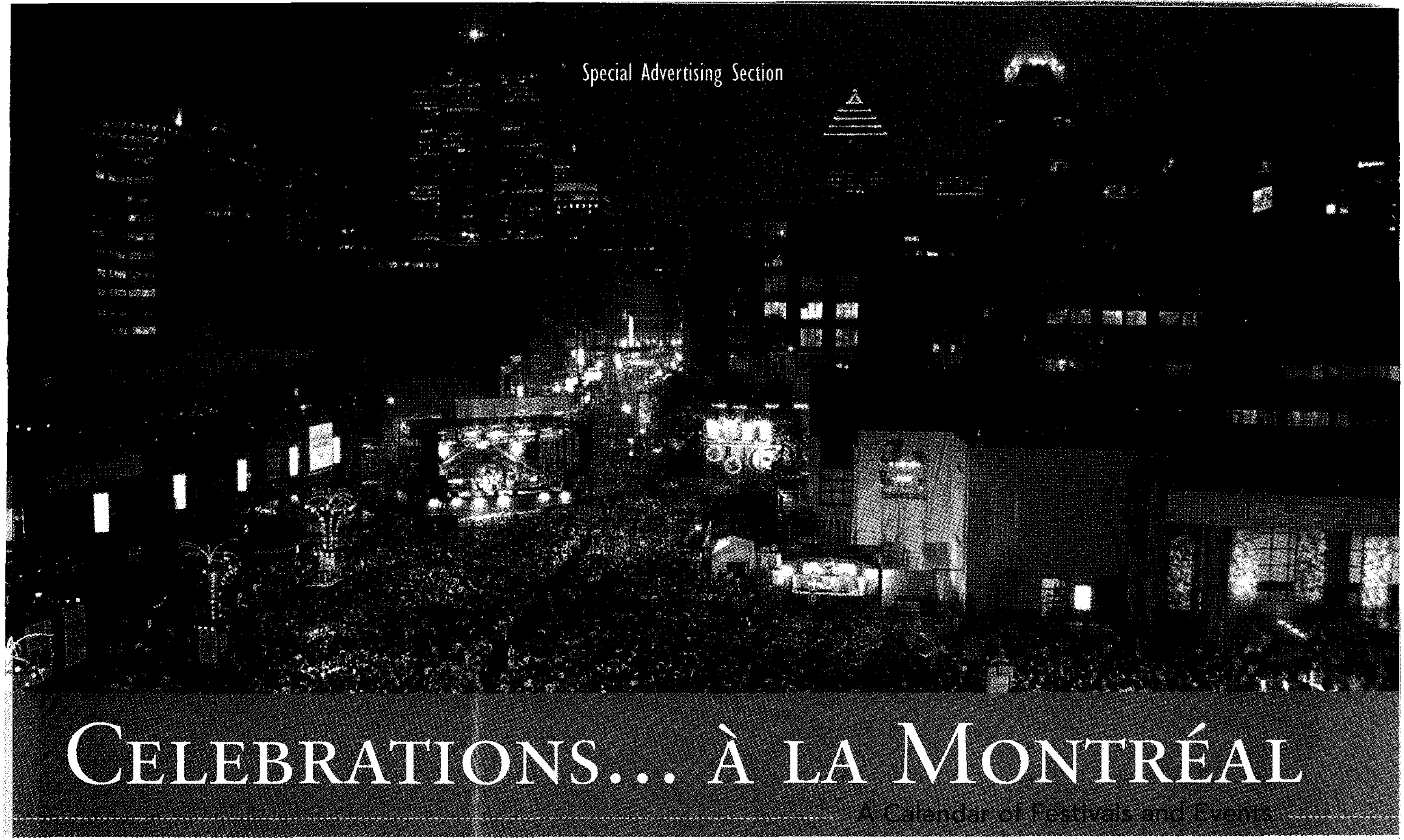


CELEBRATIONS... À LA MONTRÉAL

A Calendar of Festivals and Events

Summers in Montreal are filled with festivals and performances. The French-speaking metropolis, with dazzling mountain and river views, is crammed with rambling side streets that thread through the foothills and waterfront neighborhoods. Montreal has a distinctly European air along with a strong sense of joie de vivre—making it the perfect setting for concertgoing and outdoor jazz, the circus arts, and film—in fact, every kind of cultural event imaginable. But with so much to do in Montreal this summer, where do you start?

The **Montréal Chamber and Music Festival** will present an eclectic roster of concerts including internationally renowned artists such as the Guarneri Quartet, Eroica Trio, and Mark O'Connor at the chalet du Mont-Royal. Free concerts are also slated for the Chapelle historique du Bon-Pasteur (June 4–26).

Jazz lovers should pack their bags for the twenty-fifth annual **Festival International de Jazz de Montréal**, from June 30th to July 11th. Rightly billed as a "music celebration," nearly three-hundred-and-fifty of its five hundred concerts are free. Other performances will include Tony Bennett, Diana Krall, and Elvin Jones.

The world's largest comedy festival, **Just for Laughs**, celebrates its twentieth anniversary this summer. Past performers range from Jim Carrey and Jerry Seinfeld to up-and-comers fresh from the comedy club circuit. Expect more than two thousand outdoor performances—some thirteen-hundred free—in the city's Quartier Latin (July 15–25).

Home to the acclaimed National Circus School and the Cirque du Soleil, Montreal has long been considered the capital of the circus arts. This summer, **Cirque du Soleil**, along with other troupes in the circus world, will soon get their own capitol building, the Chapiteau des arts. Situated in what will be one of Montreal's most beautiful green spaces, the installations will include a circular stage that will function as a permanent performance center.

Not unlike the U.S., Canada celebrates its nationhood during the month of July. **Canada Day**, observed on July 1st, generally includes many parades and fireworks throughout Montreal as well as the country. In celebration of its twentieth anniversary, the **Montréal International Fireworks** (June 12–July 28), the largest pyromusical event of its kind, will sponsor teams set to compete for gold, silver, and bronze awards, called Jupiters. This year, seven countries that previously won the Gold Jupiter will vie for the coveted Platinum Jupiter, in recognition of two decades of fireworks excellence.

FESTIVAL
JAZZ
30 JUIN AU 11 JUILLET 2004

More than sixty-thousand spectators are expected to participate in the **Dragon Boat Race Festival** (July 24–25). Teams from around the world will race two kilometres in the city's Olympic Basin. The festival will also include music and folk dancing, as well as ethnic food and crafts from Montreal's richly diverse communities.

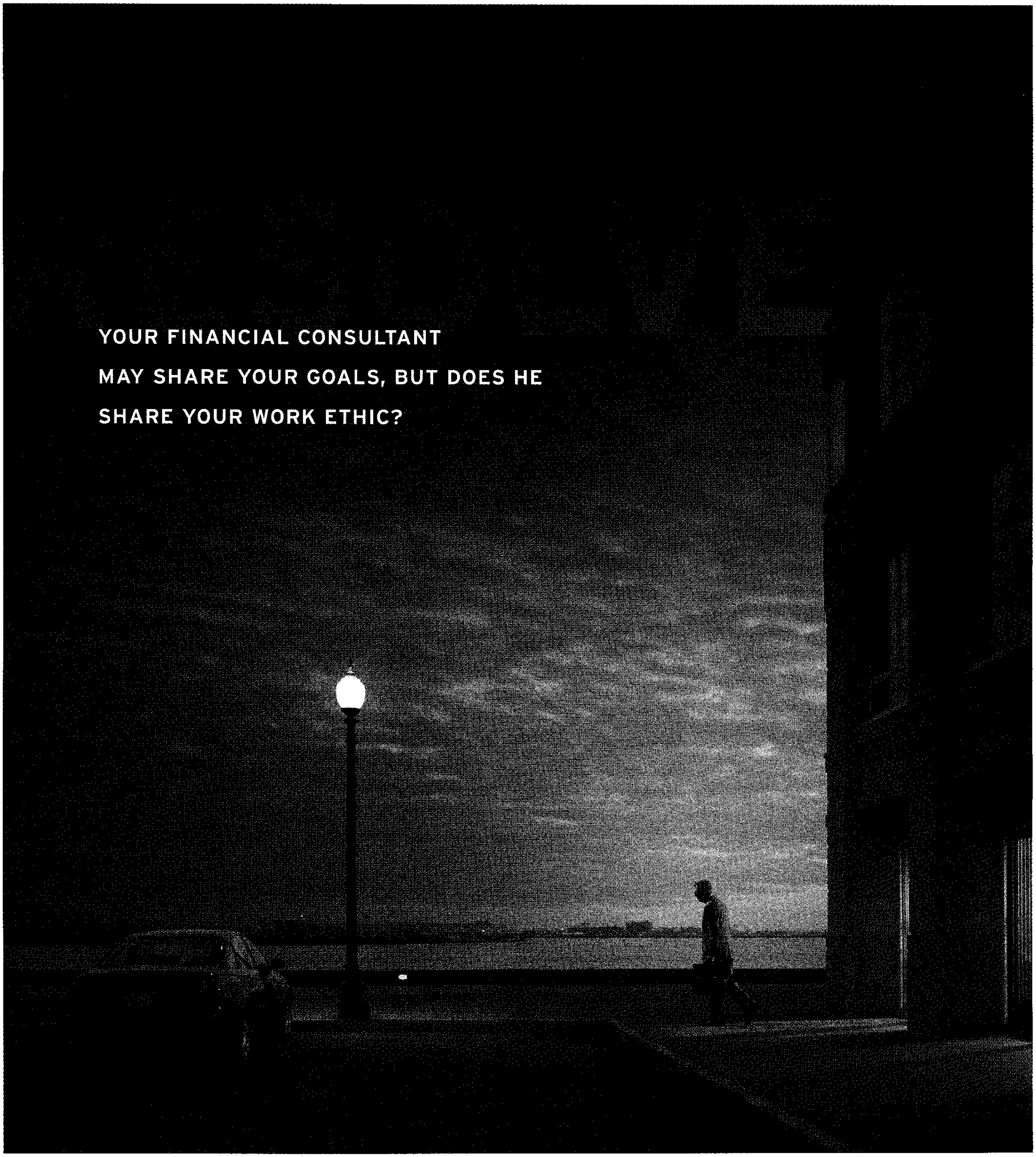
From lacrosse and sumo to boomerang and pelota, nearly a thousand athletes from more than forty-five countries will compete in **Games of the World** (July 30–August 8). The public will also be invited to participate.

The **Montréal World Film Festival** takes over from August 26th through September 6th. Well-known and first-time filmmakers' works representing more than seventy countries will be screened outdoors.

Montreal's party doesn't stop after Labor Day: Arguably, it heats up. From September 22nd to October 19th, for example, conductor Kent Nagano and the redoubtable **Orchestre symphonique de Montréal** will showcase the music of Mozart at the sumptuous, neo-gothic Notre-Dame Basilica.

For more information,
visit www.comeseecanada.com
or www.tourism-montreal.org.

TOP: COURTESY OF THE MONTREAL JAZZ FESTIVAL; BELOW: JUST FOR LAUGHS FESTIVAL, MONTREAL JAZZ FESTIVAL



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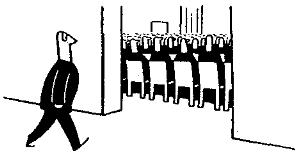
THE NEW YORKER

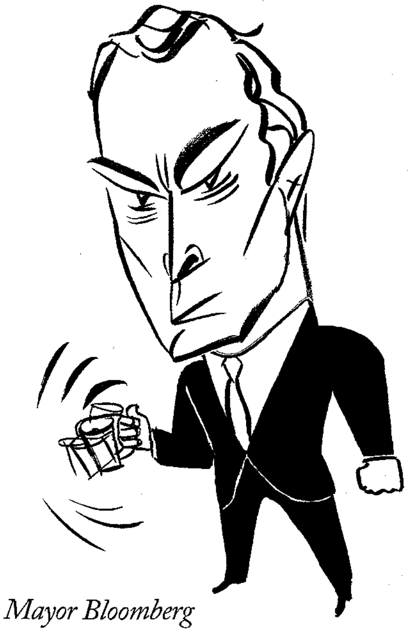
THE TALK OF THE TOWN

COMMENT
RISK MANAGEMENT



Toward the end of the first day of last week's 9/11 Commission hearings, held at the New School, in Greenwich Village, the commissioner of the New York City Fire Department, Nicholas Scoppetta, was asked to imagine a hypothetical terrorist attack. How would the F.D.N.Y. respond if terrorists set fire to the thirtieth floor of a sixty-story building? Scoppetta began, improbably, by assuring the members of the commission that if anyone on the lower floors was tempted to climb up, toward the blaze, the department would be sure to discourage him from doing so. He went on to discuss, at some length, the general importance of drawing up evacuation plans for high-rises and conducting drills regularly. Finally, having run out of digressions, he turned to the actual point of the question: the fate of those people trapped on the floors above the fire. Rescuing them, Scoppetta said, euphemistically, would be "an enormous challenge," and he left it at that.

In keeping with the events that gave rise to them, last week's hearings were, by turns, enraging, horrific, inspirational, and deeply scary. Typical of the commission's findings was the confusion surrounding the so-called repeater—a signal booster put in place after the first World Trade Center bombing, in 1993, to improve radio communication within the towers. In the early moments of the disaster, a fire chief who didn't know how to activate the device decided—mistakenly—that it was malfunctioning, a decision that may have cost some rescue workers their lives. The commission's justification for its painful, sometimes brutal revisiting of 9/11 was that, nearly three years after the attack, the city still hadn't confronted its situation, and was relying on systems and procedures that had already proved to be inadequate. To the extent that city officials had a defense, it was that they were doing the best they could with the resources available. They argued that if anyone was ducking the issue it was politicians in Washington. Just a few hours after Scoppetta testified, Mayor Michael Bloomberg declared that the city was getting "royally screwed" by the federal government, a claim that was at once crude, evidently self-protective, and essentially accurate.



Mayor Bloomberg

Washington's first response to the events of September 11th was to recognize them as a national disaster. Politicians from both parties and from all over the country pledged to do everything in their power to help New York and other potential terrorist targets prepare for a second attack. Yet the key appropriations bill didn't make it to the Senate floor before getting caught up in all the usual pie-slicing considerations. Lawmakers decided that forty per cent of the money would be divided equally among the states, without regard to their needs or the likelihood that they would ever be attacked. The rest of the money was left for the Secretary of Homeland Security, Tom Ridge, to disburse. He, too, declined to distribute funds on the basis of risk, deciding instead to follow the politically more expedient path of making awards solely on the basis of population. Taken together, the two sets of rules have had the perverse effect of actually penalizing New York. On a per-capita basis, the state currently ranks forty-ninth out of fifty in antiterror funding; while Wyoming receives $38.31 per person, New York gets $5.47.

Perhaps not surprisingly, some communities have had trouble coming up with credible uses for the windfalls they've received. Officials in Colchester,

ILLUSTRATIONS BY TOM BACHTELL

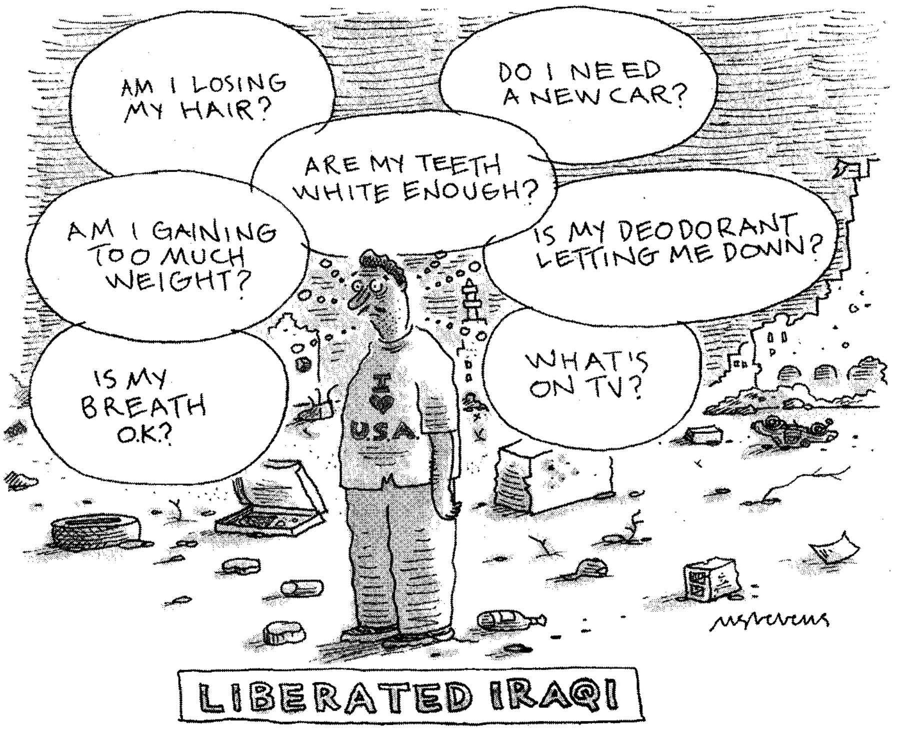
Vermont, for example, used their funds to buy a fifty-eight-thousand-dollar search-and-rescue vehicle capable of boring through concrete, to be used in case of a building collapse. The tallest building in Colchester—population eighteen thousand—has four stories. Bellevue, Washington, spent three hundred and sixteen thousand dollars to buy a bomb truck and a robot that can sniff out explosives. Last summer, when the Martha's Vineyard Steamship Authority received nearly a million dollars to upgrade port security, the harbormaster in the town of Oak Bluffs told the *Vineyard Gazette,* "Quite honestly, I don't know what we're going to do, but you don't turn down grant money."

Meanwhile, a second federal program, created to correct the deficiencies of the first, has foundered on much the same shoals. Under this program, funds were specifically earmarked for "high threat, high density" areas, and initially the money was divided among seven cities. More and more cities were added to the list, including such "high threat" municipalities as Fresno, Baton Rouge, and Columbus, Ohio. Then, last year, funding for the program was cut. In the process, New York's share of the money dropped from a hundred and forty-nine million to forty-seven million dollars.

It would probably be a mistake to suppose, on the basis of these figures, that either Congress or the Bush Administration is conspiring, in the Mayor's formulation, to "screw" New York. The explanation has to do, more prosaically, with the same weaknesses that the 9/11 Commission identified in the city's response to the disaster: habit, inertia, and institutional short-sightedness. In this sense, it's probably good that last week's hearings were as wrenching as they were, since the natural tendency in politics, as in all things, is to revert to routine. At the same time, until there is an infusion of new resources, it would be naïve to expect much more from New York than it is already doing. The city's Police Commissioner, Ray Kelly, in his testimony, estimated the operating costs of his department's counterterrorism efforts at two hundred million dollars a year. He identified another two hundred and sixty million dollars' worth of training and equipment expenses on top of that.

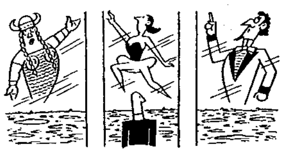
After Scoppetta had all but given up on the poor souls trapped above the hypothetical blaze on the thirtieth floor, one of the commission members, Timothy Roemer, a former congressman from Indiana, pressed him further. Why, Roemer wanted to know, hadn't the F.D.N.Y. purchased helicopters for conducting rooftop rescues? Scoppetta just laughed. "Well, where do I sign the requisition?"

—*Elizabeth Kolbert*


AM I LOSING MY HAIR?
DO I NEED A NEW CAR?
ARE MY TEETH WHITE ENOUGH?
AM I GAINING TOO MUCH WEIGHT?
IS MY DEODORANT LETTING ME DOWN?
IS MY BREATH O.K.?
WHAT'S ON TV?
I ♥ USA

LIBERATED IRAQI

ON THE BALLOT
FUTURE HALL OF FAMERS



Picture, if you will, a round building situated along a shopping strip in Woodside, Queens. It is big—perhaps fifteen thousand square feet. Inside, an image of the New York City skyline is projected on the ceiling. At ground level, there are multimedia exhibits—holograms, maybe, plus records and paintings and books—celebrating the likes of Tony Bennett, Brooke Astor, and Christopher Reeve. This is the grand vision of Albert Stern, a retired camera-store manager and lifelong New Yorker who has recently come into some money and decided, in the spirit of J.F.K., to ask what he can do for his city.

Stern was watching a Mets game in his Flushing apartment, in the spring of 2002, when he heard mention of the Baseball Hall of Fame, in Cooperstown. "I said to myself, 'Gee, that would be nice, to have a hall of fame in New York City,' " he recalled last week, while sitting on his sofa amid an assortment of stuffed animals and the chirping of Max and Bernadette, his cockatiels. Stern is built like Santa Claus and speaks with a gruff Brooklyn accent. "And then I said to myself, 'Gee, there must already be a New York City Hall of Fame—this is the greatest city in the world.' And I started to scratch my head, and I said, 'Gee, I never heard of a New York City Hall of Fame.' So I started doing some research, and, lo and behold, to make a long story short, the research indicates that there isn't a major city in the world that has a hall of fame that honors its citizens—both celebrity and non-celebrity."

Not yet, that is. (The Hall of Fame at Bronx Community College doesn't count; it is devoted to "great Americans," most of whom have no Big Apple cred.) Traditionally, New York has honored its luminaries with auxiliary street names: Isaac Bashevis Singer Boulevard (Eighty-sixth Street between Broadway and Amsterdam), Cus D'Amato Way (the south side of Fourteenth Street between Fourth Avenue and Irving), Bobby Short Place (outside the Carlyle). But Stern, who was wearing a black

T-shirt with white block letters that read, "NEW YORK CITY HALL OF FAME," and a blinking smiley-face button, explained that he has now established a board of trustees and an official Web site, through which he is currently accepting nominations for the inaugural class. He hopes to launch the new hall with an induction ceremony next spring.

So, once the word is out, who makes the first cut? At Cooperstown, the founders settled on five worthy originals—Babe Ruth, Ty Cobb, Honus Wagner, Walter Johnson, and Christy Mathewson—but they were selecting from only a few decades' worth of history, in a fairly narrow field. In the case of New York, so many names spring immediately to mind: Peter Stuyvesant, Herman Melville, Fiorello LaGuardia, Frank Gifford, the Ramones, Barbra Streisand, Rusty Staub, Al Roker, L'il Kim.

"We want to be pretty selective," Stern said. "We're thinking along the lines of starting when New York City became fully incorporated, in 1898. Which is not to say if somebody happens to mention DeWitt Clinton, or someone like that, then they will not be eligible. Of course we will consider them."

Stern and the trustees have identified eleven categories, among them architecture, education, health and science, and communications. They will accept up to two hundred nominations per category, but will select only one from each. Just about anybody, alive or dead, is eligible (though you have to be eighteen or older to submit nominations). An emphasis will be placed on "principle and dignity" and contributions to "the betterment of New York City."

So far, the group has received about a hundred nominations, the majority of which have been related to September 11th. (Heroism/bravery is a category.) "We are getting people like Mayor Giuliani, of course, and somebody nominated Willie Mays," Stern said. "But we are also getting a lot of non-celebrity people." This is partly by design: volunteerism, charitable contribution, and humanitarian work are separate categories, while sports and entertainment share a single slot. (John Starks and Jerry Seinfeld may have to wait.)

"As an example, just to show you the quality of nominations that we're receiving, somebody suggested the doctor that had discovered the West Nile virus outbreak right here in Flushing Hospital," Stern said. "And two sisters were nominated," he continued. "Now, these two sisters were the first African-Americans ever to compete in P.S.A.L. track-and-field meets in New York City. So that goes to show you how interesting this is."

What about, say, Peter Boyle?

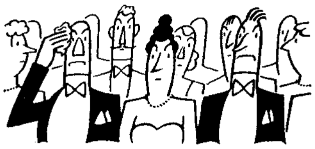
No. Instead, Stern described an Israeli immigrant who plays the musical saw. "She has become so proficient that she has played at numerous recital halls, and she plays in many, many senior-citizen centers," Stern said. "The person that nominated her we assume is most likely living with her, because they have the same address—she's a female, he's a male."

For the time being, the Hall of Fame will have to make do without an actual hall. Stern suggested that next year's induction might be held at Tavern on the Green, or perhaps the Four Seasons. To build a shrine in Woodside, he will need to raise ten million dollars.

"Now, of course, one usually asks, 'Why Woodside?' " Stern said. "Most people are not aware that Woodside is the geographic center of New York City. So of all the places to put a New York City Hall of Fame, that would seem to me a great place to put it." Max the cockatiel was making a great deal of noise. "We really feel that eventually, once the building is up, it's going to become a very, very big tourist attraction."

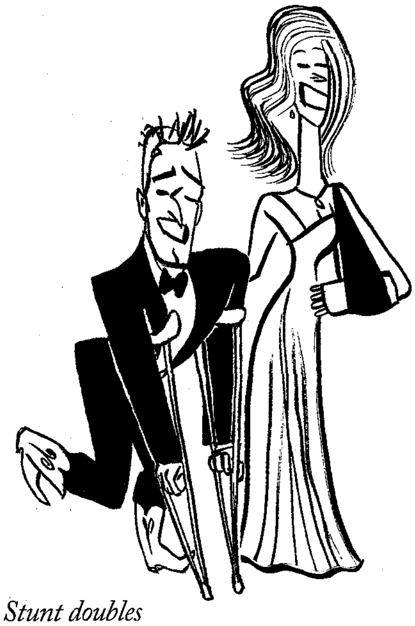
—Ben McGrath

HOLLYWOOD POSTCARD DOPPELGÄNGERS



One measure of the success of the guests on the red carpet at the Taurus World Stunt Awards, at Paramount Studios the other day, was that nobody recognized them. Many stunt doubles, incredibly fit and generally as good-looking as, if not better than, the stars they double for, simply walked by a puzzled throng of Hollywood photographers. Naturally, there were a lot of limps: wincingly fresh ones, subtle stiff-legged chronic ones, bad-habit limps from old injuries, swaggering limps disguised by ball gowns and cowboy boots, and proud lifetime-achievement limps that seemed to incorporate a full halt in every step—double hip replacements.

Whenever a stunt performer did stop—usually because someone asked "Who are you?"—it was hard to beat the accents. Zoe Bell, up for a Taurus as Uma Thurman's stunt double in "Kill Bill Vol. 2," spoke charmingly reckless Kiwi to the red-carpet press ("Oh fuck, oh *fudge*, oh jeepers!"). Tanoai Reed, Dwayne (the Rock) Johnson's real-life cousin and his double in "The Rundown," who later won for best high work (a hundred-foot tumble off a jungle cliff followed by a fifty-five-foot free fall into a pool), had a breezy Hawaiian accent nothing like the Rock's pro-wrestler basso.



Stunt doubles

The Saxon hordes were especially well represented: Sven-Ole Thorsen, who played Tigris the gladiator in "Gladiator"; Klaus Heidegger, twice a World Cup runner-up in the slalom back in the seventies; Verona Feldbusch, the Bolivian-born German TV star ("Peep!"). It was even possible to make out the *volkish* sound of *Alpenlieder* as two members of the Austrian press sang to each other in cheerful greeting. The Austrian consul stopped to chat with a reporter who bore what appeared to be a duelling scar. The ex-president of parliament and his wife, Alfred and Heidi Gerstl, called out to a friend, "*Bis später!*"

The powerful Austrian presence was due partly to the influence of one of the country's richest men, Dietrich Mateschitz, who founded Red Bull in 1984 and endowed the Taurus World Stunt Awards in 2000. Mateschitz markets Red Bull, his carbonated caffeine drink, by sponsoring events like Red Bull Ice Break (winter surfing in New England) and Red Bull Heavy Metal (snowboard rail-sliding in Salt Lake City). The Taurus awards adhere to Mateschitz's strict marketing policy: stunt people are the extreme athletes of the movie industry.

The other Austrian draw was Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger—Gerstl coached him as a boy, and Thorsen has been a fixture in his movies since the "Conan" days. On the red carpet, Billy Lucas, nominated for his work as Schwarzenegger's stunt double in "Terminator 3," praised his old friend the Governor. "The biggest thing I've gained is watching how he treats and respects people in the movie business," he said, as he held on to two curvaceous young women so tightly that you suspected they were there to hide a limp.

The show itself was full of live and prerecorded celebrity stunts (the co-hosts, Dennis Hopper and Carmen Electra, paragliding onto the Paramount lot; Michelle Rodriguez crashing through the stage floor in a red rally car, then climbing out of the hole wearing Christian Dior). The hokeyness of it made the actors sound that much more sincere when they thanked the stunt-double community.

Halfway through the show, Hopper introduced Schwarzenegger ("I like to think of him as my Republican twin," Hopper said), and the Governor, who has appeared at all four Taurus award programs, strode out to make a few jokes and to confess his debt to stuntmen. He swore that he would always be part of this event and then presented Mateschitz with an award for keeping the show in California.

As the evening drew to a close with a fusillade of gunfire (fake), fireworks (real), and explosions (hard to tell), a safety squad of men in black overalls came onstage and emptied a few fire extinguishers on some runaway flames. The crowd wandered out to a huge party on the ersatz city blocks of the Paramount lot. Nobody paid any attention to the limps anymore. For the rest of the night, under the Hollywood stars, the men and women who fight and chase each other for a living partied on the streets of New York.

—*Kevin Conley*

INK

A BOOK IN YOU

Two years from now—give or take—Elizabeth Spiers, the founding editor of the gossip Web sites Gawker and The Kicker, will publish her first novel. Around the same time, Glenn Reynolds, who writes the political Web log Instapundit, will also have a book in stores. So, too, may writers from the blogs Hit & Run, The Black Table, Dong Resin, Zulkey, Low Culture, Lindsayism, Megnut, Maud Newton, Meme-First, Old Hag, PressThink, I Keep a Diary, Buzz Machine, Engadget, and Eurotrash. Suddenly, books by bloggers will be a trend, a cultural phenomenon. You will probably read about it in the Sunday *Times*. And when that happens the person to thank—or blame—will be Kate Lee, who is currently a twenty-seven-year-old assistant at International Creative Management.

Lee spends the majority of her workday in the manner of any agent-to-be: reading manuscripts from the slush pile, vetting contracts, negotiating rights, checking her boss's voice mail. But she spends approximately an hour each day reading blogs. She scans a dozen first thing in the morning and keeps tabs on another twenty-seven throughout the day, though any of these may lead her to countless others. Reading blogs on company time is hardly unheard of, but Lee does not so much read as prospect, sifting through sloppy thinking, bad grammar, and blind self-indulgence for moments of actual good writing. It's too soon to say how this will pay off, but she represents writers from the first six blogs listed above and is in talks with writers from the rest.

"Most writers are not getting published in magazines or literary journals," Lee said the other day, clicking through her Internet Explorer favorites in her cluttered cubicle at the I.C.M. office on West Fifty-seventh Street. "For some more unconventional voices, for people that don't have connections, blogs can be an entryway into the game." Lee's first e-mail query to Spiers, in March of 2003, was the easiest one to send. Gawker had already received the kind of publicity that can propel a book to the best-seller list. But turning bloggers into authors, Lee knew, required more than just printing out a year's worth of posts and slapping a cover on them. "Look, I think everyone would love to do a Gawker book," she said. "It's a recognizable brand. The question is how do you do the book right?" When Spiers confessed that she'd been working on a novel unconnected to her Web site, Lee realized that it was the writer, not the blog, that she really wanted to represent. (Last September, Spiers left Gawker to start The Kicker.)

There are more than a million blogs, and very few of them will ever get the attention of Kate Lee—or of anyone outside each blogger's circle of family and friends. "There are people who use their blogs to write, like, 'Today I went to the cleaners,' " Lee said. Sometimes she writes to a blogger only to get the e-mail equivalent of a blank stare. The pseudonymous author of The Minor Fall, The Major Lift was particularly unreceptive. "What am I going to write a *book* about?" he replied.

Even if positioning herself as agent to the blogosphere ultimately does little for Lee's career, she'll have no regrets. "I'm now friends with these people," she said. TMFTML, in particular, often invites her along when the New York blogging clique meets up for drinks or karaoke. Still, she remains something of a curiosity in this scene. "People tell me all the time, 'You should blog.' But I don't have that need to share everything I'm thinking."

A few evenings later, Lee called from her cell phone while hailing a taxi. After directing the driver to East Seventy-second Street, she said she wanted to make it clear that, while she loves her bloggers, and has faith in them, it can be difficult to get them to be productive. "They all have day jobs," she pointed out. Writing anything longer than a blog post is a commitment they don't always seem up for. "Anyway, I've started working with a couple of graduates of the Iowa Writers' Workshop. It's very exciting. They're interesting writers—with training, and degrees to show for it."

—*Daniel Radosh*

THE FINANCIAL PAGE
SEARCH AND DESTROY

If you go to the Internet search engine Google, type in "miserable failure," and click on the "I'm feeling lucky" icon, you will be directed not to an article about "Ishtar" or the 1962 Mets but, rather, to the White House Web site and the official biography of President George W. Bush. Congratulations. You've been Google-bombed.

A Google bomb goes off when people conspire to have a particular phrase (in this case, "miserable failure") link to a given Web page, effectively tying the phrase to the page. Other famous Google bombs include one linking "more evil than Satan himself" to Microsoft's home page and, currently, one that links "weapons of mass destruction" to a page that reads, "The weapons you are looking for are currently unavailable. . . . Click the Regime Change button, or try again later."

Google bombing may be a party trick, something to amuse office workers as they trudge through the day, but it exemplifies one of the biggest challenges that Google faces as it heads toward its multibillion-dollar I.P.O. Google is as much a ranking system as a search engine. It is more efficient than any other site at analyzing information and making decisions about its importance. Google is successful not because if you search for "Enron" it will return 1.75 million pages that contain the word but because, of those 1.75 million, the most relevant are right at the top. In large part, Google does this by relying on the collective intelligence of the Web itself. At the core of Google's technology is a voting system. Every link from one Web site to another is treated as a vote; sites that get more votes are considered more valuable and, in Google's system, are weighted to have more influence. Google also takes hundreds of other factors into consideration, such as font size and the location of words on the page. But, fundamentally, the Web pages that Google says are best are the pages that the Web as a whole thinks are best.

Google's success has created a problem, though: if you have a voting system, people are going to try to manipulate it. Google bombing is the innocent face of this. Less innocent is the industry dedicated to helping Web sites maximize their Google rankings—the racket known as "search engine optimization." Some American companies have armies of programmers toiling away in Bangalore solely to boost their Google rankings. Much of what the "optimizers" do is reasonable, helping companies do a better job of presenting content, using keywords, and building pages to which others will want to link. (These are termed "white hat" tactics.) But there are also plenty of black hats—known as "index spammers"—who have simply adapted the methods and tricks of the old political machines.

In the days of Boss Tweed, people were encouraged to vote early and often, dead men were placed on the voting rolls, and citizens were paid for their votes. On the Web, companies "cloak," which means, among other things, that they disguise the real content of their sites, in an attempt to fool Google into thinking that a page is relevant to a search. Deep-pocketed players pay other sites to link to their sites, to foster an illusion of popularity. Some companies set up "link farms"—a host of interconnected Web sites that exist primarily to link to each other. A big company with a major Internet presence, for instance, can buy thousands of domain names, set up Web sites, and effectively create thousands of links out of nothing.

CHRISTOPH NIEMANN

Google, of course, knows about all this. In its recent I.P.O. filing, it said that the threat from index spammers was "ongoing and increasing," and so it has embarked on a campaign to outsmart them. A couple of weeks ago, for instance, it essentially banned a company called WhenU because of its cloaking tactics. (WhenU's Web site will no longer appear if you search for the company on Google.) To stymie the cheaters, Google issues periodic revisions to its algorithm, and companies breathlessly await the subsequent changes in their rankings. (They call this "the Google dance.") These revisions are so important to Web sites that, like hurricanes, they are given names. Web masters still marvel at the havoc wreaked by the Florida revision, last November: "Denial, then anger, gradually changing to acceptance, and, finally, healing," one wrote.

Google's efforts to keep its rankings honest have not always been popular. Some people who run Web sites that depend on the traffic that Google sends their way have accused the company of being capricious and unjust. There have even been calls from critics for it to be regulated as a public utility. But attacks on Google are shortsighted. Google is treating index spammers the way Olympic officials treat athletes who use steroids. Think of the Web as a track meet. When the other runners are juiced, it's hard to keep up with them unless you are, too. Likewise, when people start cloaking or link-farming, those who wish to remain competitive have to consider doing so themselves. This winds up hurting everyone; if Web users think Google isn't a clean game, eventually they'll stop playing.

Google works best when no one knows it's there—when people are making their own decisions about which sites are useful or good. The more important Google becomes, the harder its job gets, because more and more people find themselves trying to game the system, and wind up undermining it instead. When Google purges dubious Web sites and rejects links from link farms, it is, in a sense, counteracting the consequences of its own success. Collective intelligence relies on a certain degree of innocence. Google is using guile to re-create a guileless world, under the assumption that what we don't know should help us.

—*James Surowiecki*

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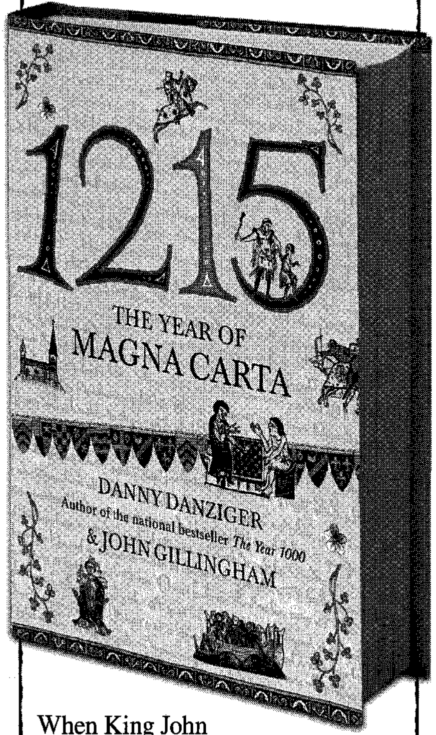

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THE POLITICAL SCENE

THE CANDIDATE

How the son of a Kenyan economist became an Illinois Everyman.

BY WILLIAM FINNEGAN

The climax of Barack Obama's 1995 memoir, "Dreams from My Father," occurs in rural Kenya when the author sits between the graves of his father and his grandfather and weeps. Obama, then in his late twenties, hardly knew his father and never met his grandfather, but in the course of writing the book he had learned their stories in devastating detail. Both were proud, ambitious men who travelled far from the Luo-speaking villages where they grew up—indeed, Obama's grandmother still has her son's Harvard diploma hanging in her house nearby. Their respective struggles in the world ended painfully, in bitter loneliness. Beside their graves, Obama, a middle-class American, both mourns and, for the first time, understands his African forebears.

People in Illinois seem largely unaware of Obama's long, annealing trip into their midst, although they often remark on his unusual calm. Now forty-two and a state senator, Obama emerged, in March, from a raucous primary as the Democratic nominee for the United States Senate. In a seven-person field, he received a remarkable fifty-three per cent of the vote—he even won the "collar" counties around Chicago, communities that supposedly would never support a black candidate. And everyone recalls that, as the votes were being tallied at his headquarters on Election Night, he seemed to be the least agitated person in the place.

Obama's Republican opponent in November will be Jack Ryan, a wealthy political neophyte. The seat they are competing for is now held by a Republican, Peter Fitzgerald, who is retiring. An Obama victory thus would move the Senate Democrats, at present outnumbered fifty-one to forty-eight, one seat closer to a majority. It also would make Obama only the third African-American to serve in the Senate since Reconstruction.

On a raw, rainy late-April day in Springfield, the state capital, Obama, who represents a district on Chicago's South Side, ducked out of the statehouse for a meeting with labor leaders from southern Illinois at an A.F.L.-C.I.O. building down the street. "This is a kiss-and-make-up session," he told me as we entered a ground-floor conference room—the state A.F.L.-C.I.O. had supported one of his opponents in the Democratic primary. Twenty-five white males, in windbreakers and golf shirts, sat around the room. They represented the building trades—the painters' union, the carpenters.

Obama, lanky and dapper in a dark suit, his shoulders almost strangely relaxed, seemed to know most of the men there. He broke the ice with a joke at the expense of Ed Smith, a huge, tough-looking delegate from Cairo. Obama had met Smith's mother on a recent downstate swing and had discovered that "she's the one who really calls the shots there." Smith laughed, and the other delegates said they wanted her phone number. Then Obama gave a short, blunt, pro-labor speech. The men eyed him carefully. Heads began nodding slowly, jaws set, as he drove his points home: "two hundred thousand jobs lost in Illinois under Bush; overtime rights under threat for eight million workers nationally; the right to organize being eroded." Then he said, "I need your help," and took questions.

The questions were terse, specific, well informed. They dealt with federal highway funding, non-union companies coming in from out of state on big contracts, the implications of the Free Trade Area of the Americas agreement. Obama listened closely, and his answers were fluent and dauntingly knowledgeable, but he kept his language colloquial. "It's not enough just to vote right," he said. "You gotta advocate. You gotta reframe the debate, use informal power. A lot of these bills coming up now are lose-lose for Democrats."

"That's right," somebody said.

"I have a reputation as this abstract guy talking about civil rights," Obama went on. "But anybody who knows my state legislative district knows I fight for our share of resources. And I will fight for Illinois highway dollars."

He mostly told the union men what they wanted to hear. Then he said, "There's nobody in this room who doesn't believe in free trade," which provoked a small recoil. These men were ardent protectionists. A little later, he said, with conviction, "I want India and China to succeed"—a sentiment not much heard in the outsourcing-battered heartland. He went on, however, to criticize Washington and Wall Street for not looking after American workers.

Later, I asked him if he wasn't waving a red flag in front of labor by talking about free trade. "Look, those guys are all wearing Nike shoes and buying Pioneer stereos," he said. "They don't want the borders closed. They just don't want their communities destroyed."

Back at the statehouse, Obama, who is chairman of the Health and Human Services Committee, rushed from meeting to floor vote to committee room. Everybody seemed to want a word with him. Terry Link, the senate majority whip, complained about Obama's successes in a long-running poker game. "I'm putting his kids through college," Link said. Kirk Dillard, a leading Republican senator from the Chicago suburbs, looked chagrined when I asked him about Obama. "I knew from the day he walked into this chamber that he was destined for great things," he said. "In Republican circles, we've always feared that Barack would become a rock star of American politics." Still, Dillard was gracious. "Obama is an extraordinary man," he said. "His intellect, his charisma. He's to the left of me on gun control, abortion. But he can really work with Republicans." Dillard and Obama have co-sponsored many bills. Though Dillard was unwilling to concede the general election to Obama, he described Illinois as "a major player in recognizing African-Americans. We are proudly the state that produced Abraham Lincoln."

On the campaign trail, Barack Obama speaks a full range of American vernaculars. Photograph by Thomas Dworzak.

MAGNUM

Obama was actually born in Hawaii. His father, also named Barack Obama, was a foreign student there. His mother, Ann, was white, and only eighteen when she married his father. She and her parents, originally from Kansas, had moved to Honolulu. When her husband left for Harvard, she and their toddler stayed behind—there was no money in his scholarship for them to go East—and the father ultimately returned alone to Kenya, where he worked as a government economist. Barack's mother's second marriage, to an Indonesian oil manager, occasioned a move to Jakarta, when Barack was six. He lived there for four years, and in his book he writes about his time in Indonesia as simultaneously lush and a harrowing exposure to tropical poverty—more harrowing, perhaps, for his mother than for the little boy who barely remembered any other life. Then Barack returned to Hawaii, where he was brought up largely by his grandparents. The family lived in a small apartment—Barack's grandfather was a furniture salesman and, later, an unsuccessful insurance agent; his grandmother worked in a bank—but Barack managed to get into Punahou School, Hawaii's top prep academy. His mother always said that he got his brains from his father, and he was raised on tales of his father's brilliance. The great man wrote to them regularly, but, though he travelled around the world on official business for Kenya, he visited only once, when Barack was ten.

He was a black child, by American lights, but his mother and his grandparents—the only family he knew—were "white folks," and his confusion was acute. In "Dreams from My Father," Obama describes how, as a teen-ager, he tried marijuana and cocaine. ("I guess you'd have to say I wasn't a politician when I wrote the book," he told me. "I wanted to show how and why some kids, maybe especially young black men, flirt with danger and self-destruction.") He went to Columbia University, and liked New York, but he found the city's racial tension inescapable. It "flowed freely," he wrote in his memoir—"not just out on the streets but in the stalls of Columbia's bathrooms as well, where, no matter how many times the administration tried to paint them over, the walls remained scratched with blunt correspondence between niggers and kikes. It was as if all middle ground had collapsed."

Fired with political idealism, he decided to become a community organizer. He wrote to organizations all over the United States, and finally got one reply, from Chicago. He moved there, going to work for a tiny, church-based group that was trying to help residents of poor South

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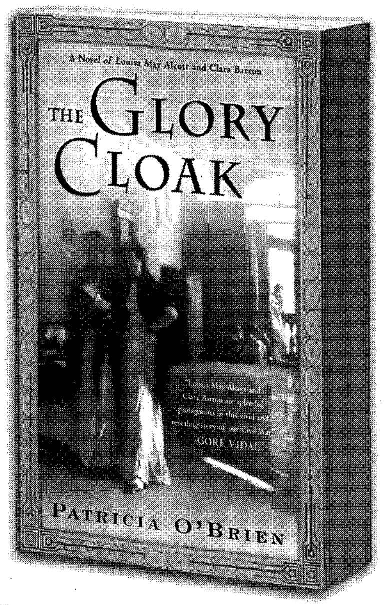

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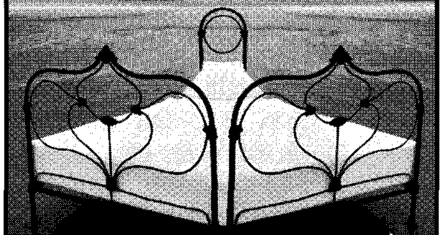

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Side neighborhoods cope with a wave of plant closings. It was a humbling, exhausting, and only rarely edifying job; Obama stuck with it for three years. "Chicago" is the longest section of his memoir, and in many ways the bleakest, for it tunnels deep into the bedrock of inner-city despair and inadequate politics and black self-destruction. It is also an unsentimental celebration of the city, which has a rich lode of brash, bluesy charm, of course, but also was a place for a serious, talented, too cosmopolitan young African-American to sink some roots. There is a lovely scene describing a black barbershop in Hyde Park that Obama wandered into soon after arriving in the city. He still gets his hair cut there, twenty years later.

Obama left organizing to attend Harvard Law School, and in 1990 he became the first African-American president of the *Harvard Law Review*. Abner Mikva, a five-term congressman from Illinois who was at that time Chief Judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the D.C. circuit, tried to recruit Obama as a clerk, a position considered a stepping stone to clerking on the Supreme Court, but Obama turned him down. "He could have gone to the most opulent of law firms," David Axelrod, a longtime friend who is now Obama's media adviser, said. "After Harvard, Obama could have done anything he wanted." What he wanted was to practice civil-rights law in Chicago, and he did, representing victims of housing and employment discrimination and working on voting-rights legislation for a small public-interest firm. He also began teaching at the University of Chicago Law School, although he declined to pursue a tenure-track post, hoping to save time for politics. And when he got the chance to run for the state senate in his district, which included both Hyde Park—the home of the university—and some of the poorest ghettos on the South Side, he jumped at it.

"People are whupped," Obama told me. "I'm whupped. My wife is whupped. Unless it's your job to be curious, who really has the time to sit and ask questions and explore issues?"

He didn't look whupped. Still loose and alert after a long day, Obama was sipping iced tea in a busy, Caribbean-themed restaurant in a small shopping center in Hyde Park. But he had already spent sixteen months running for the Senate—and seven years as a state senator—and he could ruefully sympathize with the political apathy of the average beleaguered citizen. Tonight, he had turned his cell phone off and dismissed his aides; he just wanted to get home for the bedtimes of his daughters, who are two and five. His wife, Michelle, is also a lawyer, and their daily lives are the familiar three-ring American family circus—even without the steroidal additive of Barack's political career. Yet Barack had been reluctant to take even a semester off from teaching while campaigning, partly because he needs the income. To survive this campaign financially, the Obamas will take out a second mortgage on their apartment.

"Teaching keeps you sharp," Obama said. "The great thing about teaching constitutional law"—his subject—"is that all the tough questions land in your lap: abortion, gay rights, affirmative action. And you need to be able to argue both sides. I have to be able to argue the other side as well as Scalia does. I think that's good for one's politics."

Every few minutes, our conversation was interrupted by passersby congratulating Obama on his primary victory. The people who stopped to shake his hand were black and white, old and young, professors and car mechanics. Some Obama obviously knew. Others seemed to be strangers. He was affable with everyone, smiling warmly, but in exchanges that lasted more than a few seconds it was possible to see him slipping subtly into the idiom of his interlocutor—the blushing, polysyllabic grad student, the hefty black church-pillar lady, the hip-hop auto-shop guy. Black activists sometimes say that African-American kids need to become "bi-dialectic"—to speak both black English and standard English—to succeed. Obama, the biracial kid from Hawaii, speaks a full range of American vernaculars.

After each interruption, he would resume. Americans aren't simply too tired to think about politics, he said; they're being deliberately turned off. "If you make political discourse sufficiently negative, more people will become cynical and stop paying attention. That leaves more space for special interests to pursue their agendas, and that's how we end up with drug companies making drug policy, energy companies making energy policy, and multinationals making trade policy."

"I'm not getting a flat-screen TV till something better comes along."

To an outsider with only the broadest idea of Chicago politics, Obama's victory in the Democratic primary actually looked like a victory over cynicism. He had not slimed his opponents. Nor was he the candidate of the fabled local machine—that was Dan Hynes, the state's comptroller, who comes from a powerful Illinois political family. Precinct captains and party organizations and old-line labor unions (most of the Teamsters, the A.F.L.-C.I.O.) had supported Hynes. The machine, however, is an outdated conceit. "A few creaky parts still work," David Axelrod told me. "They can still elect a few water commissioners or sub-circuit-level judges. But no precinct captain can tell people how to vote for President or the Senate."

Obama had to overtake not only Hynes but also a former securities trader named Blair Hull, who spent twenty-nine million dollars on his campaign and, as a result, led in the polls until the closing weeks. Hull's popularity vanished after lurid details of his divorce surfaced, including accusations that he had struck his ex-wife. Obama, meanwhile, attracted legions of fervent volunteers. "People call it drinking the juice," Dan Shoman, the political director of Obama's campaign, said. "People start drinking the Obama juice. You can't find enough for them to do."

Obama's core support in the primary came from African-Americans, most of them in Chicago, and from "lakefront liberals"—residents of the city's swankier boroughs, most of them white professionals. Among the latter, many had been drawn initially by Obama's early opposition to the invasion of Iraq. Apparently, few who heard a speech that he gave at an antiwar rally in downtown Chicago in the fall of 2002—months before he announced for the Senate—forgot it. "It was the best antiwar speech I have ever heard, bar none," a lifelong Democratic activist, now in her late sixties, told me.

I asked Obama about that speech.

"I noticed that a lot of people at that rally were wearing buttons saying, 'War Is Not an Option,'" he said. "And I thought, I don't agree with that. Sometimes war is an option. The Civil War was worth fighting. World War Two. So I got up and said that, among other things." What he said, among other things, was "I am not opposed to all wars. I'm opposed to dumb wars." Invading and occupying Iraq, he said, would be "a rash war, a war based not on reason but on passion, not on principle but on politics."

Abner Mikva told me, "Barack is the most unique political talent I've run into in more than fifty years. I haven't been this excited about a candidate since Adlai Stevenson first got me into politics." As an illustration of Obama's gifts, Mikva said, "I've seen him speak on Israel in front of a Jewish audience—a very, very tough crowd. And he was incredibly thoughtful, saying, basically, 'There are a lot of people in that area, with lots of different interests and points of view, and they all have to be taken into consideration, and we can't just rally around Sharon,' and so on. And the crowd was just wowed. I've fluffed that question so many times myself—and I'm Jewish. Kerry fluffed it on 'Meet the Press' the other day. But Barack managed to make those people who disagreed with him feel comfortable with the disagreement."

This is a regular theme with Obama: supporters who disagree with him. The two big Chicago daily papers both endorsed him enthusiastically in the primary, even though they disagreed with him on major issues—his opposition to the war in Iraq and, in the case of the *Tribune*, his opposition to the North American Free Trade Agreement.

This seems to be a pattern in Illinois. Paul Simon was the most respected political figure in the state for decades. He was a liberal Democrat who came from a conservative downstate region where his name remains political gold. The universal explanation for Simon's near-universal popularity is "integrity," and this spring I heard the word a lot from people discussing Obama. It refers to consistency and incorruptibility, but also to a refusal to resort to smear politics. The cultural and political distance between Chicago's South Side and southern Illinois is vast—Cairo is closer to Little Rock than it is to Chicago, "and not just geographically," as Obama likes to say. Voters in such disparate places will never agree on affirmative action, gun control, or many other issues that Obama has taken clear positions on. And yet, in a state with a population that is only fifteen per cent African-American, he needs to campaign hard downstate, far from his base, making his pitch on economic issues and personal appeal.

Obama's ease in front of predominantly white crowds—or, for that matter, all-white crowds—is a source of wonderment in Illinois. I've seen it, and it looks so effortless that it doesn't seem remarkable. The sight of big white corn farmers proudly wearing big blue "OBAMA" buttons and lining up to shake his hand is, I must say, slightly more striking.

In a packed community center near

Decatur, in central Illinois, Obama was addressing a crowd of a couple of hundred. Ryan Marucco, the president of the Young Democrats of Macon County, told me, "I just never heard anybody speak like him before." Marucco, apple-cheeked and short-haired, wore a necktie with an American Eagle on it. "It's like he's talking to you, and not to a crowd."

Obama began by saying, as he often does, that people were always getting his name wrong, calling him "Alabama" or "Yo Mama." The crowd roared with laughter. In Swahili, he said, Barack means "blessing." Then he took the question of racial difference head on, declaring, "We have shared values, values that aren't black or white or Hispanic—values that are American, and Democratic."

He went on, "People are always asking me, 'Why, with these fancy degrees and a professorship, would you want to go into something dirty and nasty like politics?' And my answer is 'We've got too much cynicism in this country, and we're all in this together, and government expresses that.' "

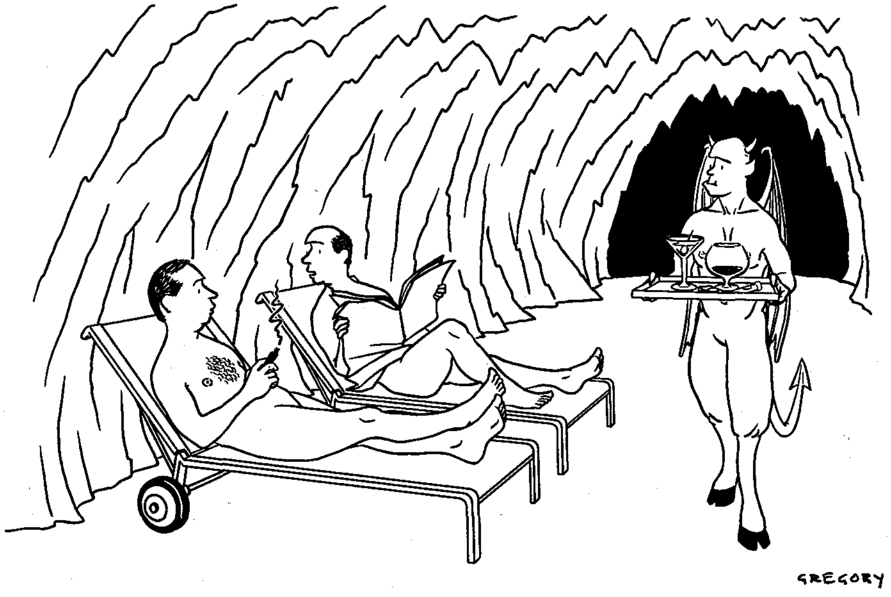
Two big factories in Decatur had closed in recent years, and thousands of jobs were lost. Obama told the crowd, "We have an Administration that believes that the government's role is to protect the powerful from the powerless." The little community center rang with angry acclamation. This situation could be changed, Obama said. "Take a leap of faith with me."

Later, rolling through the flatlands of central Illinois in a leased S.U.V., Obama offered an explanation of his ability to connect with white rural and small-town voters. "I know those people," he said. "Those are my grandparents. The food they serve is the food my grandparents served when I was growing up. Their manners, their sensibility, their sense of right and wrong—it's all totally familiar to me."

In an essay in *The New Republic*, Noam Scheiber argues that, apart from charisma, what makes Obama such a strong candidate outside the black community is precisely his exotic (and unthreatening) background—everything that serves to differentiate him from what white voters might see as stereotypically African-American.

In his brief career, Obama has probably faced more political strife from within the black community than from without. Chicago's South Side has been a black-majority congressional district for many generations, and in 1992, when Obama returned from law school, he led a registration drive that put a hundred and fifty thousand new voters on the rolls, helping Bill Clinton carry Illinois. But when Obama started running for office he was a newcomer, not deeply connected. He wasn't "black enough," with his light skin and fancy education and big law-school job at the University of Chicago. He hadn't paid his dues.

These reservations came to the fore in 2000, when Obama made an ill-advised run for Congress. The incumbent, Bobby Rush, was a former Black Panther who had been in office four terms. Obama thought he was a lacklustre representative. Still, Rush beat him soundly in the primary. On Election Day, Obama recalls, people going to the polls told him he seemed like a nice fellow, with some good ideas. "But Bobby ain't done nothing wrong," they said.



"It's Hell, but at least it's white-collar Hell."

More recently, Emil Jones, Jr., the president of the state senate and a senior figure in Illinois black politics, has heard other members of the black caucus in Springfield complain that he has been favoring Obama, giving him credit for their legislative work in order to build up his protégé's résumé. Jones scoffed at the complaints when we talked. ("Crabs in a barrel.") Obama, he said, was an extremely unusual politician, able to work with all sorts of people, even white conservatives. It made him the obvious leader on important bipartisan legislation. Jones didn't deny having a role in helping Obama succeed: "You can have a dynamic running back, but if he can't get out of the backfield he can't show what he can do."

Jones then did a strange thing. He is an older man, very dark-skinned, gruff, and given to referring to politics as "this business." But he got up, walked around from behind his desk, held out his arms, and peered into the middle distance, grinning unself-consciously. We were in a gray-walled office on the sixteenth floor of a building in downtown Chicago. Jones sighed happily. "One day, I want to retire, and sit back and watch him on the national scene."

In Springfield, Obama led a campaign for death-penalty reforms that resulted in unprecedented legislation, requiring the police to videotape all interrogations in cases involving capital crimes. Jan Schakowsky, a liberal Democratic congresswoman who represents Evanston and parts of north Chicago, told me that she thought the reforms were terrific but that, statewide, such things would never be popular, and that Obama was doing himself no favors politically by championing them. Similarly, Obama recently co-sponsored landmark legislation to curb racial profiling—not a popular issue outside minority communities, and not, therefore, a smart move for a man running for the U.S. Senate.

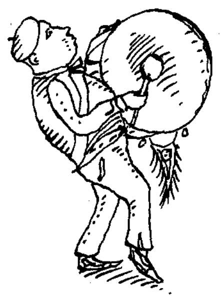
Obama seems to be a true legislation nerd. When he talks about the maneuvering it took to line up the state's prosecutors behind the videotape bill, and to keep the police associations neutral, his eyes narrow in pleasure. "You can't always come up with the optimal solution, but you can usually come up with a better solution," he said over lunch one afternoon. "A good compromise, a good piece of legislation, is like a good sentence." He nodded. Miles Davis's "Kind of Blue" was playing in the background. "Or a good piece of music," he said. "Everybody can recognize it. They say, 'Huh. It works. It makes sense.' That doesn't happen too often, of course, but it happens."

Obama married into a black working-class South Side family, and he clearly feels at home there. "We tease," his wife, Michelle, said. "He had this mixed-up, international childhood, while I was Chicago all the way. Big family. My grandmother lived five blocks away. Ozzie and Harriet, Barack says. Really, though, we're both Midwesterners. Underneath it all, he's very Kansas, because of his grandparents and his mom. Our families get along great."

I asked Michelle about her childhood. "I was just a typical South Side little black girl," she said. "Not a whole lot of money. Going to the circus once a year was a big deal. Getting pizza on Friday was a treat. Summers were long and fun." Michelle's father was a city worker, her grandfather a handyman. "They were bright, articulate, well-read men," she says. "If they'd been white, they would have been the heads of banks."

Michelle, who is tall and elegant and frank, learned something about who became heads of banks after she finished public high school with top marks and followed her brother, Craig, to Princeton. "I enjoyed it there," she said. "I liked the safety and quiet. It helped having an older brother who was a basketball star." (Craig Robinson is the fourth-leading scorer in Princeton history.) "Of course, it was different, being black, but I found a black support base for myself. It was also different not being filthy rich." She laughed. "At the end of the year, these limos would come to get kids, and me and my brother would be carrying our cardboard boxes down to the train station. But it helped my confidence, being able to succeed there. I actually knew lots of kids in high school who could have competed there, academically. You just had to get in. So much of getting ahead in this world is access, networking."

Michelle went on to Harvard Law School, then returned to Chicago, where she went to work at a downtown firm. In her first year, she was assigned to be an adviser to a summer associate from Harvard—Obama. He turned out to have little interest in corporate law but plenty of interest in Michelle. They both moved into the public sector. Michelle now works at the University of Chicago Hospital, as executive director of community affairs. We met in her office, on a radiant spring morning. Like her husband, Michelle claimed to be totally frazzled, yet she looked remarkably fit, cheerful, relaxed. "I've got a job, and I'm the primary caregiver for two very bright little girls," she said. "It's crazy. It's not realistic."



I asked Michelle about being a political wife.

"It's hard," she said. She smiled slyly. "And that's why Barack is such a grateful man."

Jan Schakowsky told me about a recent visit she had made to the White House with a congressional delegation. On her way out, she said, President Bush noticed her "OBAMA" button. "He jumped back, almost literally," she said. "And I knew what he was thinking. So I reassured him it was Obama, with a 'b.' And I explained who he was. The President said, 'Well, *I* don't know him.' So I just said, 'You will.' "

Illinois has been getting steadily more Democratic in recent years. Bill Clinton won Illinois twice, the second time by a bigger margin, and in 2000 Al Gore won it, fifty-five per cent to forty-three. The state Republican Party is in disarray. Its most recent governor, George Ryan, left office in disgrace in 2002; he is now under indictment on more than twenty counts of official corruption. Things look so bad for Republicans in Illinois that it's widely said that the Bush-Cheney campaign will not contest the state.

But the U.S. Senate, where no Republican seat can be surrendered without a fight, is another matter. And to national strategists Jack Ryan should look like a candidate who can beat Obama. Although most of the money Ryan spent in winning the Republican primary was his own, he is not the usual vanity candidate. ("Six-foot-four and Hollywood handsome," the columnist George Will has written, noting that Ryan "keeps in moral and physical trim by going to Mass and the gym each morning.") Ryan went to Harvard Law School, too—and Harvard Business School—and is indeed, at forty-four, good-looking. He was born in Wilmette, a wealthy suburb north of Chicago, and still lives there. He was once married to Jeri Ryan, a television actress now on "Boston Public." Ryan made his fortune as a partner at Goldman, Sachs, but he left the firm in 2000 to teach for three years at an all-black, inner-city Catholic boys' high school in Chicago. During each of those years, Ryan points out, every graduate of the school was accepted in college.

When we met, he talked almost exclusively about the urgent need to expand economic opportunity for the poor. And he laughed sharply when I said that "civil-rights, social-justice issues," as he called them, were not usually considered big vote-getters among Republicans. "Republicans haven't been trying to reach the bottom twenty per cent," he said, meaning the poor. "But Democrats have started taking them for granted." Ryan thinks that the best way to help the poor is to give them school vouchers and easier access to business capital. He fiercely opposes gun control, abortion, and same-sex marriage, supports the war in Iraq, and favors the abolition of the capital-gains tax—indeed, his hostility to taxes is so strong that he was endorsed by Jack Kemp and has become a favorite candidate of the Club for Growth, the Washington-based anti-tax lobby, which recently spent two million dollars in the Pennsylvania Republican primary in an unsuccessful effort to defeat Senator Arlen Specter.

Other potential large contributors have reportedly been given pause, however, by unresolved questions about his divorce, in 1999, from Jeri Ryan. When Jack Ryan sued to have some of the divorce records sealed, her lawyer initially contended that the maneuver was an effort to suppress information that might damage his future political career. Ryan says that he was only concerned about the possible effect on their nine-year-old son. For a time, the issue threatened to derail his primary campaign. Obama has said that the subject has no place in the Senate race.

After winning the nomination, Ryan gave a press conference in the statehouse pressroom in Springfield, where reporters traditionally test candidates on their knowledge of state government. It wasn't an auspicious début. Ryan declared that the number of state employees in Illinois had risen to nearly eight hundred and fifty thousand—the actual number is about sixty thousand—and accused Obama of having voted for a number of new fees and taxes that he had actually voted against.

Ryan's political instinct was nonetheless sound. As a four-term legislator, Obama has a long voting record that can be hung around his neck. He has, for example, fought the insurance industry hard and successfully over health care for poor children—and might be blamed for helping push up local rates.

Ryan told me that he will also be watching closely for contradictions between Obama's statements in the primary campaign and what he is saying now to the general electorate. "Voters, in my view, have a high antenna for inconsistency," Ryan said. He had already heard about shifts, for instance, in Obama's position on the Bush tax cuts. Back when Obama was speaking to Democrats alone, he had called for across-the-board repeals—now he was talking about repealing only the tax cuts of the wealthiest five per cent. (The Ryan campaign was unable to document this alleged discrepancy.)

The left in Illinois, as it happens, is monitoring Obama for similar trimming toward the political center. When his speech at the antiwar rally in 2002 was quietly removed from his campaign Web site, activists found that to be an ominous sign. It is traditional, of course, for politicians to tack to the center after winning a primary, hoping to attract swing voters. Earlier this month, when major newspapers (including the *Times*) and leading Democrats (including Illinois's other senator, Dick Durbin) began calling for the resignation of Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld as a result of the Abu Ghraib prison-torture revelations, Obama criticized the Administration's Iraq policy, but added, "I have no doubt about Donald Rumsfeld's sincerity." Deciding Rumsfeld's fate, he said, should be left to President Bush.

Two weeks ago, after a poll showed Obama leading statewide by sixteen points, Jack Ryan hired a new media consultant, Scott Howell—a development that, as the Chicago *Sun-Times* noted dryly, "could change the tone" of the Senate race. Howell, a Texan, is best known for having worked on the 2002 Senate campaign of Saxby Chambliss, in Georgia. Chambliss, in an upset, defeated Senator Max Cleland, a popular veteran who lost both legs and an arm in the Vietnam War. Chambliss's people produced an extraordinary TV commercial that questioned Cleland's commitment to national defense by combining images of him, Osama bin Laden, and Saddam Hussein. Ryan's campaign manager said that Howell was hired "because he wins."

Another Ryan campaign worker started making news last week. Justin Warfel, a young man with a shaved head, suddenly attached himself to Obama, and, armed with a video camera and a tape recorder, began following him everywhere around Springfield. His mission, according to the Ryan campaign, was to "make sure Obama has a consistent message," and a campaign spokesperson called it "standard practice in national politics." Warfel's methods, however, were unusually aggressive. He followed Obama's every movement, even private conversations, holding his camera, according to the Associated Press, "less than two feet from Obama's face, barking questions." Tom Massey, who has been the pressroom manager in the Springfield statehouse for twenty-five years, said, "I've never seen anything like it before. This is a new low in Illinois politics." The Republican leader of the state senate, Frank Watson, was also critical, telling the A.P., "I don't care if you're in public life or who you are, you deserve your space."

Obama told local reporters, "Everybody knows politics is a contact sport," and he told me that he felt sorry for Warfel, but it was obvious that he was angry that even his phone conversations with his wife and daughters were being monitored. "Scorched-earth politics," he said. "Precisely the kind of politics I want to change." When I called Ryan's press secretary, Kelli Phiel, she was unapologetic: "I guarantee you that if Mr. Obama were to ask Justin to step back a foot or two, Justin would do so." ♦

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OUR FAR-FLUNG CORRESPONDENTS

SAIL AWAY

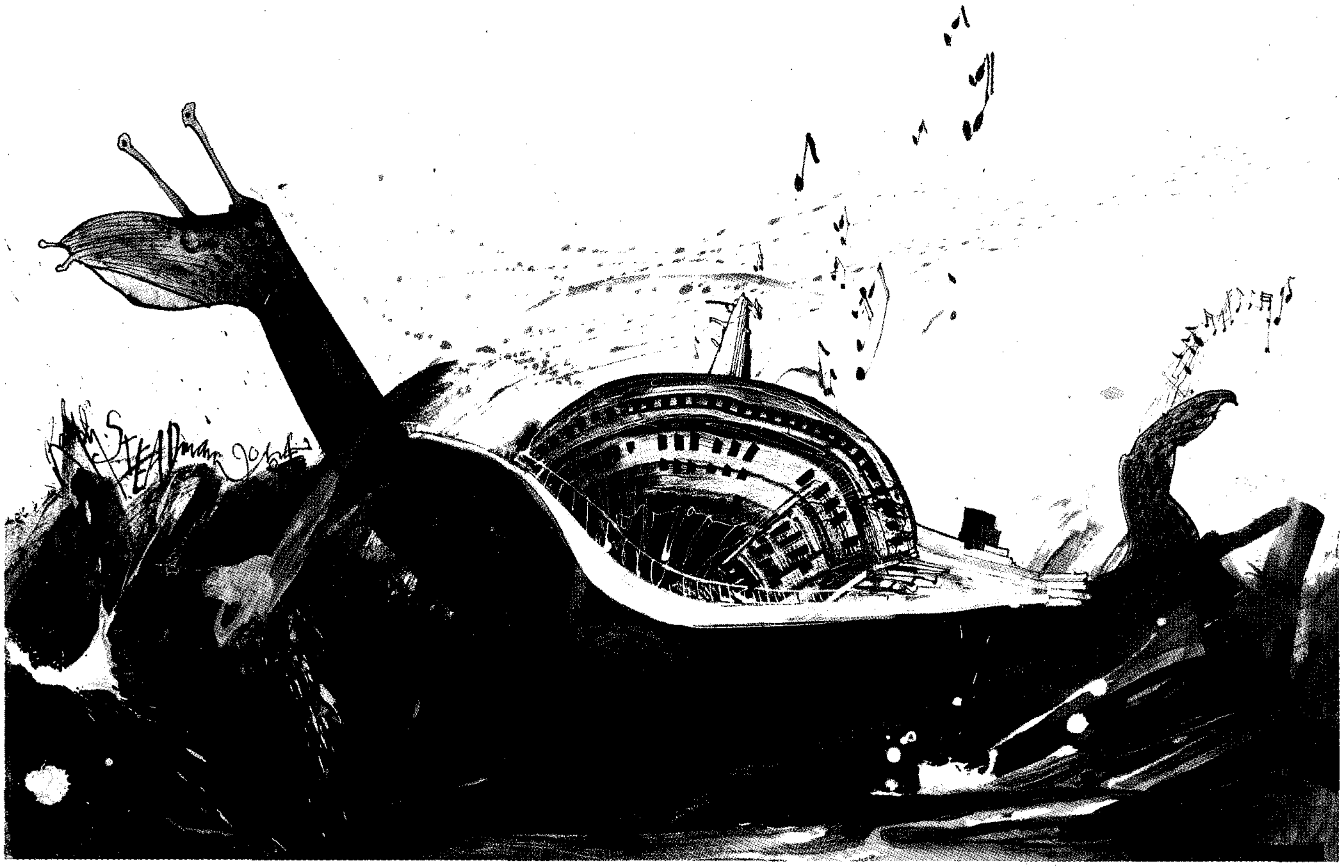
Six days to New York on the Queen Mary 2.

BY SIMON SCHAMA

Overlooked—literally—by the seventeen-deck Queen Mary 2, as she slid into her berth at Pier 92 on April 22nd, was the dead white bird. Laid out on its funeral barge beside the U.S.S. Intrepid, as flightless and obsolete as the dodo, Concorde wasn't going anywhere. The sleek dream of supersonic speed, the princess of whoosh, which got you there before you'd started, was now, officially, a museum piece. The future—as the mayoral bloviations greeting the ship's midtown docking affirmed—belonged to a hundred and fifty thousand tons of steel capable of grinding through the ocean at all of thirty knots (that's around thirty-five m.p.h. to you landlubbers). The latest and most massive of the transatlantic liners takes twenty times as long to carry you from New York to England as a Boeing or an Airbus. And that's the good news—the reason, in fact, for Commodore Ronald Warwick, the master of the Queen Mary 2, to brag, at the quayside ceremonies, that Cunard was poised to compete with the airlines for a serious share of the transatlantic business.

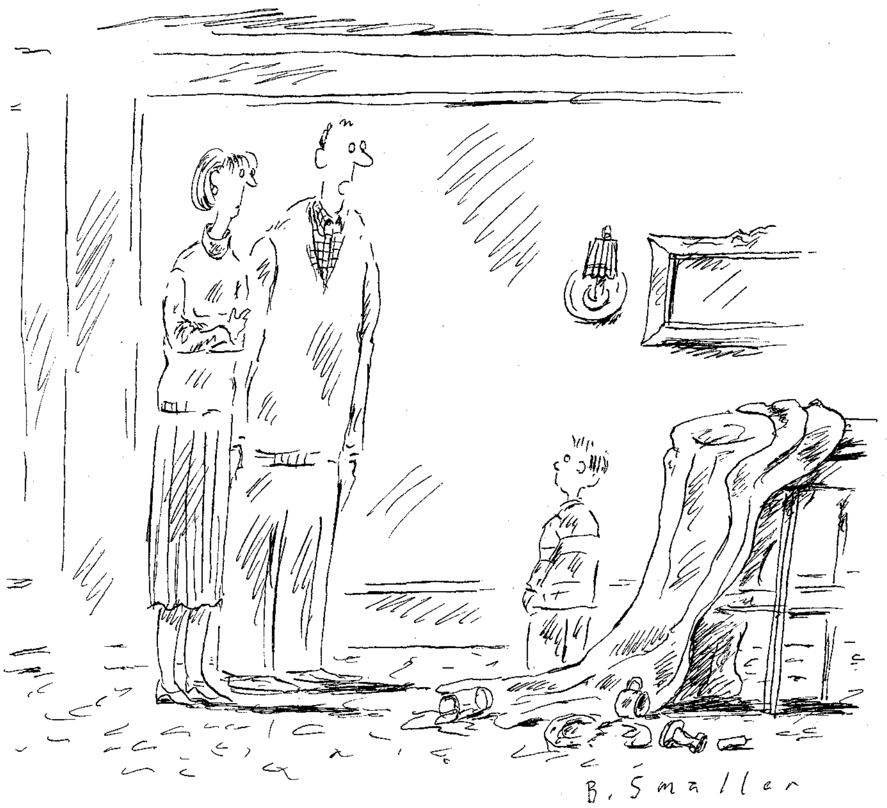
Like those of us who had sailed with him through Force 10 gales and thirty-foot swells, the Commodore may have been pardonably giddy at coming through the worst that the feisty ocean could throw his way on a maiden North Atlantic voyage and still getting to the Statue of Liberty on schedule. But could this be the start of something really big and really slow? We take for granted the appeal of velocity, that there is money to be made and pleasure to be had from the gratification of the instantaneous: the three-gulp Happy Meal, the lightning download, the vital cell-phone message that I am here and are you there? And where has this culture of haste got us? Baghdad, apparently, where the delusions of the get-it-over-with war are being compounded by the unseemly rush to exit, leaving the whole gory mess for some other loser to sort out.

It has been thus, as Stephen Kern, in "The Culture of Time and Space 1880-1918," points out, ever since the orgiasts of speed at the turn of the twentieth century made acceleration the necessary modern ecstasy. In 1909, the Italian writer and artist Filippo Marinetti declared, in his "Futurist Manifesto," that "the world's magnificence has been enriched by a new beauty: the beauty of speed." On an afternoon two years later, a sixteen-frames-a-second movie of the investiture of the Prince of Wales was developed in a darkroom on a British express train and taken to London, where it was shown the same night. Translated into military strategy by the overarmed Great Powers, as the historian A. J. P. Taylor liked to note, the



RALPH STEADMAN

The Atlantic had definitely got our attention; its illimitable breadth, the kick of its kinetic energy registered in our groggy bodies.



"Just wait until your nanny gets here."

imperatives of railway timetables drove the logistics of preëmptive mobilization. A pause to ponder was already a defeat. So modernity bolted out of the starting gate in 1914: Archduke shot, millions of men in gray and khaki precipitately herded into railway cars, carnage begun right on cue—before the Flemish mire slowed everything down and millions plodded to their doom.

For much of its history, Cunard has been part of this feverish hurry-up. In 1907, its flagship, the Mauretania, captured the Blue Riband for fastest transatlantic crossing, and kept it for twenty-two years, spurring jealous—and fatal—competition. A novel by Morgan Robertson, "The Wreck of the Titan; or, Futility," appearing in 1898, had featured a liner named Titan that cuts another ship in two simply "for the sake of speed." And the captain of the Titanic was blamed for sailing full steam, even in an area notorious for ice floes, in deference to the White Star Line's determination to wrest the Blue Riband from Cunard.

Abraham Cunard, a Philadelphia shipwright, had settled in Nova Scotia, in the loyalist diaspora, after the American Revolution. The loyalists, severed from not only their homes but the mother country, had good reason to want their mail delivery to take less than six weeks, the time often needed for sailing ships to cross from Britain to Canada or the West Indies. Abraham and his son Samuel prospered with a small mail fleet, and in the eighteen-thirties Samuel, watching George Stephenson's locomotive the Rocket hurtle along the tracks at thirty m.p.h., became convinced that on the oceans, too, steam propulsion was about to replace sail.

Paddle-driven steamers had been in common use in both American and British coastal waters and rivers since the early nineteenth century, and steam-assisted masted ships had crossed the Atlantic since 1819. But it was only in 1838 that the first full steam crossing was made, by the St. George Steam Packet Company's ship Sirius. Immediately, the journey was cut to two weeks (twelve days to Halifax, fourteen to Boston). The Sirius was followed by Isambard Kingdom Brunel's Great Western, which added style to speed. It boasted a hundred and twenty-eight staterooms, bell ropes to summon stewards, a ladies' stewardess, and a seventy-five-foot saloon, decorated with panels celebrating "the arts and sciences."

Disdaining both opulence and reckless speed, Samuel Cunard offered something else when, in 1839, he made a tender to the Admiralty for the conveyance of Her Majesty's Mail: dependability, guaranteed by the novel presence of an on-board engineer. In July, 1840, the Britannia, the first of Cunard's packets, docked at Boston after a two-week crossing. A wooden-hulled ship with two masts and a central funnel, it was a footling eleven hundred and fifty tons and about two hundred feet long (compared with the QM 2's hundred and fifty thousand tons and quarter-mile length). In the port where the American Revolution began, Britannia was greeted with gun salutes, a performance of "God Save the Queen," and the declaration of Cunard Festival Day.

The word "historic" was much repeated over the public-address system last April 16th, as the Queen Mary 2 moved out into the Solent from its Southampton berth under a classically gray English spring sky. The maiden North Atlantic crossing was hugely subscribed, and, despite the famous superstitiousness of sailors, no one aboard seemed to have been deterred by, or even to have spoken of, the tragedy that cast a shadow over the ship's prospects even before the ship had been formally launched. On November 15, 2003, while the QM 2 was still in the shipyard at Saint-Nazaire, in Brittany, where it was being built, a gangway, bearing fifty people, collapsed, throwing some of them fifty feet to the concrete bed of the drydock. Fifteen were killed and twenty-eight injured. Many of the dead and injured were shipyard workers and family members and friends, who were visiting the liner before its sail to Southampton.

In defiance of ill omens, the transatlantic send-off was exuberant; for those braving the raw breezes there was sparkling wine on the upper-deck terrace. But anxieties about the target of opportunity presented by a mass of slowly moving Anglo-American steel precluded all but a vigilantly screened handful from the dockside "sailaway." A spirited band did what it could with "Rule Britannia" and "Life on the Ocean Wave," but neither was able to compete with a phantom soprano hooting from the loudspeakers. Then the ship's whistle drowned out everything else, and streamers were tossed from the decks, landing beside flocks of indifferently bobbing seagulls. Waving hankies were to be seen only in blown-up photographs of Cunard's past glory days mounted on walls in the ship's interior.

And where were the cows? Samuel Cunard had made sure that each of his packets was equipped with at least one ship's cow, to provide a steady supply of fresh milk, which, to anyone faced with trays of small plastic miniatures of "dairy-taste" creamer, seems like an idea whose time should come again. There would be risks, of course. During the fourth crossing of Brunel's immense Great Eastern, in 1861, the seas were so high that, according to one report, they not only tore off the paddles but knocked over the deck-mounted cowshed, sending one of the animals through the skylight of the saloon, where it landed on an understandably surprised barfly. This might have happened early in the morning, for in the halcyon days of the packets saloons opened for business at 6 A.M. and closed at eleven at night. A decent breakfast on the Britannia in the eighteen-forties was steak and Hock, which Cunard might think of adding to room service, as a more cheering way to start a day on the tossing waves than weak tea, overstewed coffee, and dried-out croissants. And anyone who has waited all his life for the moment when, from a blanket-wrapped steamer chair, he could interrupt his reading of Anita Loos or Evelyn Waugh to summon a steward for a cup of piping-hot bouillon will have to wait a bit longer, for on the QM 2, I regret to report, bouillon was there none.

What there is on the QM 2 is grandeur: lashings of it, Bel-Air baroque, heavy on the upholstery. The dominant style is officially described as "Art Deco," but it is more *le grand style Ginger et Fred:* sweeping staircases (especially in the triple-decker main restaurant); long, curved bars (very handsome in the Chart Room); leopard-patterned carpets; and, in one theatre, bronze bas-reliefs that feature disporting deities, as in the pre-multiplex yesteryear, though the athletic statuary posted at the doors summons up Albert Speer and "Honor the Komsomol," rather than Garbo and Groucho. Over the shipboard "art" a tactful veil should be drawn, but there *is* great art on the Queen Mary 2; namely, the exterior of the ship itself—a thrilling scarlet-and-black tower of a funnel and four heroically scaled brushed-steel propeller screws mounted on deck seven, as mightily torqued as anything from the hand of Richard Serra.

Even though the ship is a small floating town—twenty-six hundred passengers and thirteen hundred crew—it seldom feels crowded. It helps if you have a cool twenty-seven thousand dollars to spare, for then you get a share of the Balmoral Suite: 2,249 square feet of what the brochure describes as "sheer extravagance," including a dining area for eight; two interactive plasma-screen TVs; your own exercise equipment; and (the least they could do, really) "a fully stocked bar." For eighteen thousand dollars less, you rate a not so fully stocked bar and about two hundred and fifty square feet of elegant, if rather narrow, cabin and balcony. This would still be nearly two hundred square feet bigger than Charles Dickens's stateroom aboard the Britannia in 1842. For his thirty-five guineas, Dickens got a claustrophobic twelve by six: two stacked curtained bunks (no room to stow his trunk); two washstands, with jugs of water brought by stewards; a niggardly porthole, rather apt to leak; and a single oil lamp. But even this austerity was princely compared with steerage on such ships, where passengers slept communally in rows of swinging bunks "tween decks" and cooked in their own utensils without much help in the way of lighting or ventilation.

For the cabin-class passengers, the center of the Britannia, both socially and physically, was the grand, coal-heated saloon, which Dickens described, in "American Notes," as

> a long narrow apartment, not unlike a gigantic hearse with windows in the sides; having at the upper end a melancholy stove, at which three or four chilly stewards were warming their hands; while on either side, extending down its whole dreary length, was a long, long table, over each of which a rack, fixed to the low roof and stuck full of drinking-glasses and cruet-stands, hinted dismally at rolling seas and heavy weather.

Dinner, taken on oilcloth-covered tables, which, predictably, aggravated the roll of crockery in heavy weather, was at one: roasted potatoes, baked apples, and much pork, in the form of pig's head or cold ham (for some reason, pig was thought to lie easiest on oceangoing stomachs). At five, a cheerless supper was served, usually of boiled potatoes and moldering fruit, washed down with brandy-and-water or wine, but then there was always the saloon to repair to. Those among the crew who could play a tune or two sometimes did, and there were a few books in the saloon. Only in the second half of the nineteenth century, when wooden hulls were replaced by steel and paddles by screw propellers, did a comprehensively stocked and magnificently panelled and furnished library become a crucial fixture. The heavily used library on the QM 2 runs the gamut from Danielle Steel to Tom Clancy; there is a wall of less intensively visited Everyman classics, and I found, improbably lurking amid the bodice-rippers and spy thrillers, Albert Camus's "The Plague."

Though the best thing about a week's Atlantic crossing is an eyeful and a day full of nothing other than the rhythm of the sea and the silvery curving rim of the world, and although Old Cunarder hands insisted that that was the way that crossings, rather than mere vulgar cruises, should be, Cunard is now owned by the mother of all cruise companies, Carnival Corporation. And the job description of its toiling entertainment directors begins with the abhorrence of a vacuum. So the gym rumbles with massed treadmilling; the Canyon Ranch spa is packed with heavy massaging; the herbal sauna is crammed with oversized marine mammals (bipedal). In front of the two huge theatres, passengers line up by the statuary to hear a glamorous string trio of Ukrainian musicians dressed in miles of retro-ballgown satin taffeta give their all to "Jealousy"; or watch spirited young British actors throw themselves into greatest hits from "Romeo and Juliet" and "A Midsummer Night's Dream"; or listen to lecturers like me pontificating about Atlantic history.

In the Queens Room, a frighteningly accurate bust of the actual Queen Mary, the present Queen's grandmother—a human galleon who seemed to sail fully rigged through state ceremonies as lesser craft chugged contemptibly about her—surveys Gavin Skinner and Lydia Lim, the dance teachers, as they steer giggly novices through the samba, cha-cha, or foxtrot, the "walk-walk, side-together-side" contending with the unhelpful motion of the waves. On the parquet, middle-aged "gentlemen hosts" hired to squire single ladies through the dances glide their partners around with courtly grace. After being screened for ballroom-dancing prowess and other credentials of respectability, the gentlemen hosts sign on for at least two voyages, and pay a token sum for the privilege. But if Gordon Russell Cave, an impeccably turned-out widower, is any guide, the hosts see their work more as vocation than as vacation: the purveying of shipboard happiness. The moments Gordon recalled with most pleasure were those befitting a *preux chevalier*. One widow told him, after he had walked her back to her seat, that it was the first time she had danced since her husband's death, four years before. "I think it helped, that little moment," he said.

Nothing aboard the ship, though, gets as much exercise as the jaws. Indeed, devoted chowhounds could spend the waking hours of the entire six-day voyage doing little more than grazing the vessel, bow to stern, since, as the ship proudly boasts, there is somewhere to eat something twenty-three hours out of twenty-four. Not surprisingly, things British are done best. If fish and chips with mushy peas is your idea of spa food (and why not?), you'll not be disappointed at the ship's pub. And, come four o'clock, the Winter Garden is packed with tea parties gobbling cucumber sandwiches made of regulation-issue white-bread triangles, while a tristful harpist completes recollections of rainy afternoons trapped in British seaside palm courts, even though the trees here are fake.

Upmarket on the eighth deck, the Todd English restaurant pretty much lives up to the starry reputation of the chef of Boston's Olives by offering potato-and-truffle love letters, succulent braised short ribs, and the inevitable fallen chocolate cake. But the best food on board is probably to be had at the Chef's Galley, where, in the style of a celebrity-chef TV program, Sean Watier, an exuberantly wise-cracking chef, talks a dozen or so diners through the preparation of the meal. As he was about halfway through a mango-and-crab salad, things started to get exciting in a Quentin Tarantino kind of way. Sean capped his demo about the importance of really sharp knives by gashing his thumb. Later, while he was blowtorching the crème brûlée, he was asked about problems of cooking in heavy weather and was about to offer a breezy reply when the answer came from a phantom guest who had been there all along—the Atlantic Ocean, which lifted us all up in its big cat's-paw and unceremoniously set us down again. It was exactly the "heave and shudder . . . as of the breast of a man in deep sleep" that Evelyn Waugh has Charles Ryder sense in the midst of his transatlantic crossing in "Brideshead Revisited." "Either I am a little drunk," Charles's wife, Celia, says as the cutlery starts to slide, "or it's getting rough." For me, back in the cabin, on deck twelve, with the floor at a tilt, and the bed the only safe place to be, the two conditions seemed mutually and unhappily self-reinforcing.

Though huge "resort" ships like the QM 2 come with acres of deck, big picture windows, and balconies, they go to great lengths to allow passengers who may have mixed feelings about the ocean to ignore it. The planetarium, the casino, the umpteen watering holes, the golf simulator, the spa, the disco, the ballrooms, the unceasing frenzy of entertainment in big dark spaces are all designed to keep the seawater well out of the way and even out of sight. But on this night old man Poseidon, evidently assisted by Tritons with serious attitude, was crashing the scene. On the Beaufort wind scale of 1 to 12, this one, howling around the ship like a marine banshee, was a 10, eventually getting up to seventy miles an hour, which is not far short of hurricane force. Likewise, the motion of the sea is measured by a range going from Moderate through Rough to High, the last being well beyond Very Rough. That night and much of the following day, our piece of the Atlantic was Very High, beyond which the only available term is Phenomenal, and by then your cabin is probably filling with water and men in tuxedos are ushering women and children to the boats.

As the mango-and-crab salad and I became unhappily reacquainted, the gale certainly seemed to be turning phenomenal. Everything that could fall in the cabin did so, including me. The Queen Mary seemed to be locked in a frenzied dance with the elements, the ship reaching and rising and then, on the crest of the churned water, going into a wicked shimmy, its sides shaking and jangling like a belly dancer on spliff, before sinking back voluptuously into the trough. Eventually, a message came over the P.A. system from the Officer of the Watch, whose voice, resembling that of a firm but fair English schoolmaster, had already established itself as authoritative. It was not reassuring: "Code Bravo, Code Bravo, Code Bravo." And then it added, "Control group to muster." True, it spoke without much inflection, as if reporting a cricket score from a sticky wicket. But since the same announcement had been made earlier that day, followed by the information that this was a practice, repeat practice, fire drill, a real Code Bravo was not what anyone wanted to hear in this situation. An hour later, the announcement "Stand down" was heard, and another announcement, a bit later on, referred to a "minor incident, now completely under control."

The thing about a crew of thirteen hundred—which includes, after all, masseurs, cabaret singers, and wine waiters—is that not all of them are trained, in the British merchant-marine tradition, to keep mum about trifling things like a fire at sea on a maiden voyage in the midst of a Force 10 gale. It was, I was assured, a teeny-weeny fire, just a razor socket burning up in a crew cabin. At the time, however, it certainly made an impression.

The next morning, the sea was still Very High, but Professor Schama, due to deliver a lecture at eleven-fifteen, was Very Low (and, for that matter, Very Rough). But I was billed to talk about the man who had given the very first lecture aboard a Cunarder, the Cambria, in August, 1845: the African-American author and orator Frederick Douglass. Douglass was en route to what turned into a triumphal lecture tour of Britain and Ireland and had been befriended by the Hutchinson Family Singers (Asa, Jesse, Abby, John, and Judson), from New Hampshire. Staunch abolitionists, the Hutchinsons had the inspired idea that Douglass might give a lecture on the iniquities of slavery, notwithstanding the fact that among the passengers were several slaveowners from Georgia and Cuba. Douglass—with mixed feelings, one suspects—agreed, subject to permission of the captain, the famously capable Charles Judkins. Judkins, as it happened, was a former slaveowner (perhaps a slave trader) who had seen the light, and was happy to oblige. Standing on the saloon deck, Douglass began to read from the brutal slave laws of the South, when, predictably, he was drowned out by heckling and threats of physical assault from the outraged slaveowners. The Hutchinsons weighed in with inspirational songs but, until Captain Judkins called for the bosun and vowed to put the rioters in irons unless they desisted, the situation looked ugly. The Captain's gesture amazed Douglass, who began his tour of Britain (as he would end it) with an unrealistically awestruck view of British racial tolerance. About Cunard, however, he felt less charitable on the return journey, also on the Cambria, in 1847, since it accepted his forty guineas and assured him that he would be accommodated in cabin class, only to demote him to steerage when he boarded, a scandal that made the correspondence columns of the *Times* and drew from Samuel Cunard himself a public guarantee that this sort of thing would not happen again.

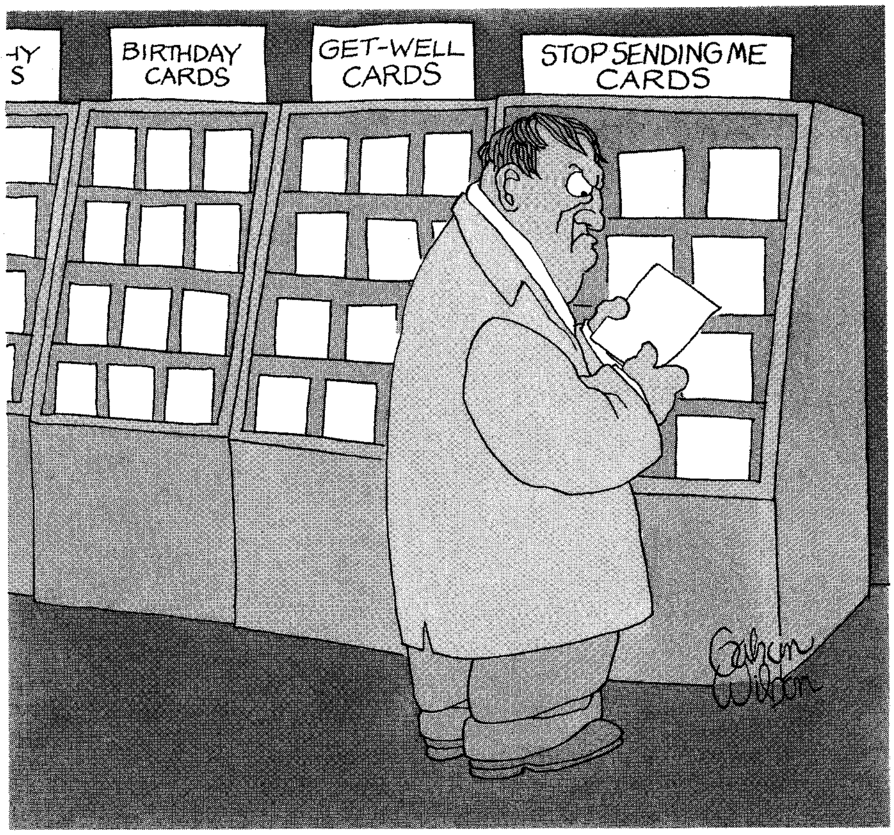
Duty required that, unsteady or not, I offer this history to any hardy souls who managed to lurch and stagger their way to the theatre. But was there enough left of the lecturer to get the job done? A sympathetic program assistant, Penny Folliott, had the answer: "Try the injection." I did, and whatever was in the nurse's potent syringe not only banished the queasiness but effected a startling transformation, whimpering academic translated into approximation of Russell Crowe in "Master and Commander." The talk got delivered, seated, and diagonally. I slid a bit. But the audience slid with me.

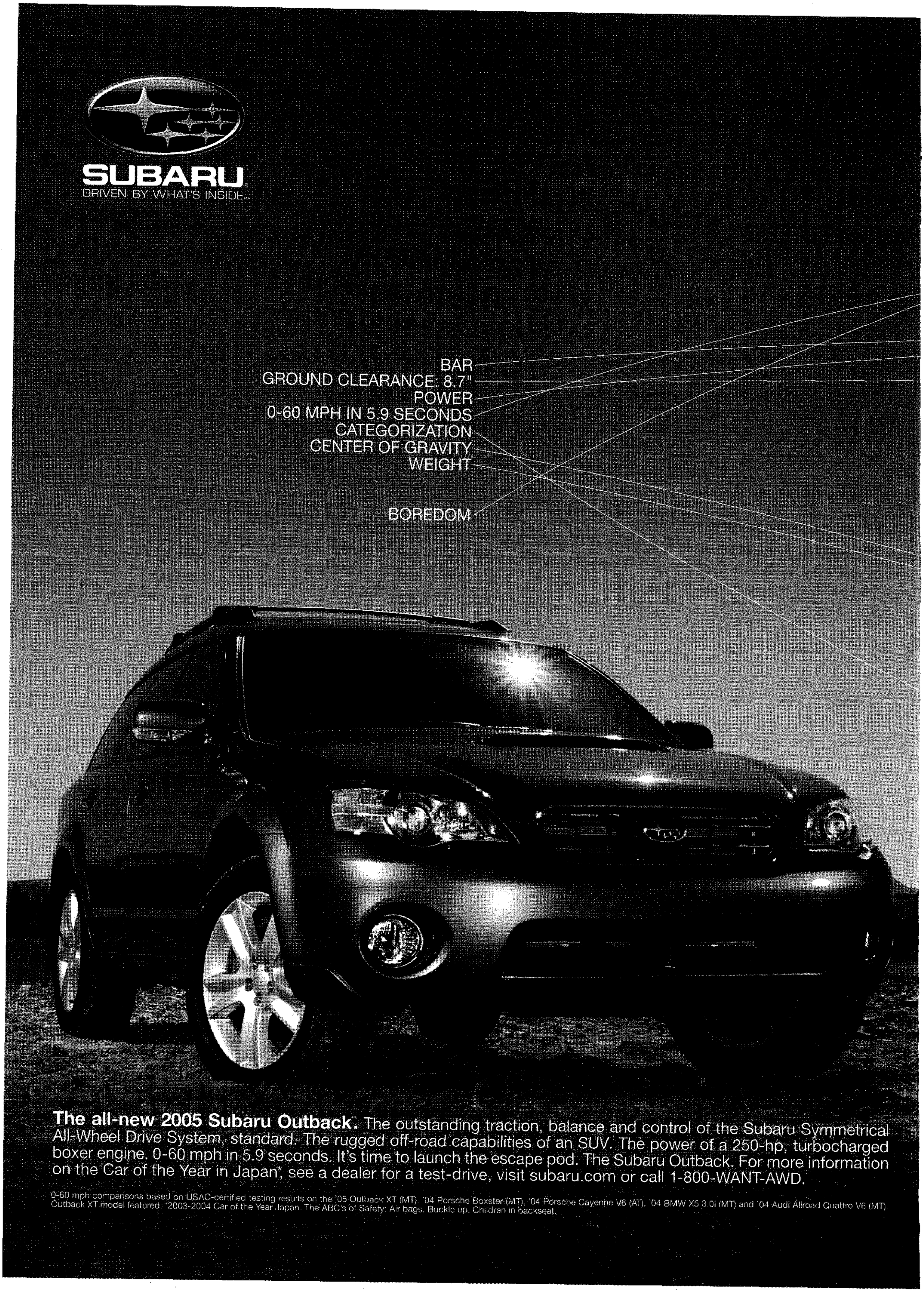
The Atlantic had definitely got our attention; its illimitable breadth, the great kick of its kinetic energy registered in our groggy bodies. We offered it our sincere respects. All the seats in front of the big windows were now filled with people mesmerized by the immense opera of the deep gray swell, the rolling waves as bulky and meaty as elephants in a temper. Every so often, beside ladies doing watercolors, a particularly angry, torn-up wall of seawater would slap and hammer against the window.

After a day of respite, the Atlantic returned—another gale, less brutal, but serious enough for deck joggers to be ushered inside by the crew. Shuffleboard was postponed again. Quoits were out of the question. But by this time most of us had got our sea legs and had learned to respect the motion of the ocean, moving with it. Foxtrot was recommenced in the Queens Room, and disco caught a new beat. For that matter, the towering ship itself seemed to be having a ball, breezing ahead to the rough music of the wind and the swell. And as the QM 2 forged along, so it became, for most of the passengers, no longer a floating resort hotel drifting innocuously into Caribbean harbors under postcard skies. This one, we told ourselves, appropriating some of the credit for its performance, was a liner, made for crossing, not cruising. "Oh, the passengers would like it," Commodore Warwick said, smiling, "if I told them that was the worst weather I'd ever sailed in, but . . ." The smile continued; the sentence didn't. He wasn't about to wreck our newfound talent for salty yarns. At the dockside celebrations in New York, he conceded that the crossing had been "turbulent."

When the Verrazano Bridge came looming through the gentle fog and the first tugs and pilots began to spout red-white-and-blue jets of water in dwarfish greeting, many of us were caught off guard by a sense of proprietorial affection. Emotions doubled. There was the catch in the throat as, right on cue, the morning sun picked out the Statue of Liberty and then travelled from plinth to torch with telegenic precision; there was the flood of memory, the empathy—even among the Queens Grill high rollers—with the destitute millions who had come this way through their own storms and stresses; and the jolt of recognition, as we made the turn up the Hudson, that this, too, had been, and was still, America, perhaps the one that really mattered.

All that, I suppose, could have been predicted. What took us by surprise, as we were ushered by Lydia and Gavin, kitted up in smart gray disembarkation suits, to the immigration desks set up in the ballroom, was a valedictory urge to wish the ship well, and to try and find the words to tell others who might normally opt for Newark Airport and the seven-hour air tube to Heathrow that they might want to give the QM 2 a go; that, mirabile dictu, there are worse things than being made to sit down and fill the eyes with nothing but sky and rain and wind-whipped water as a hundred and fifty thousand tons of big ship does what it can to ride it at thirty-five miles an hour. In fact, there are few things better. ♦





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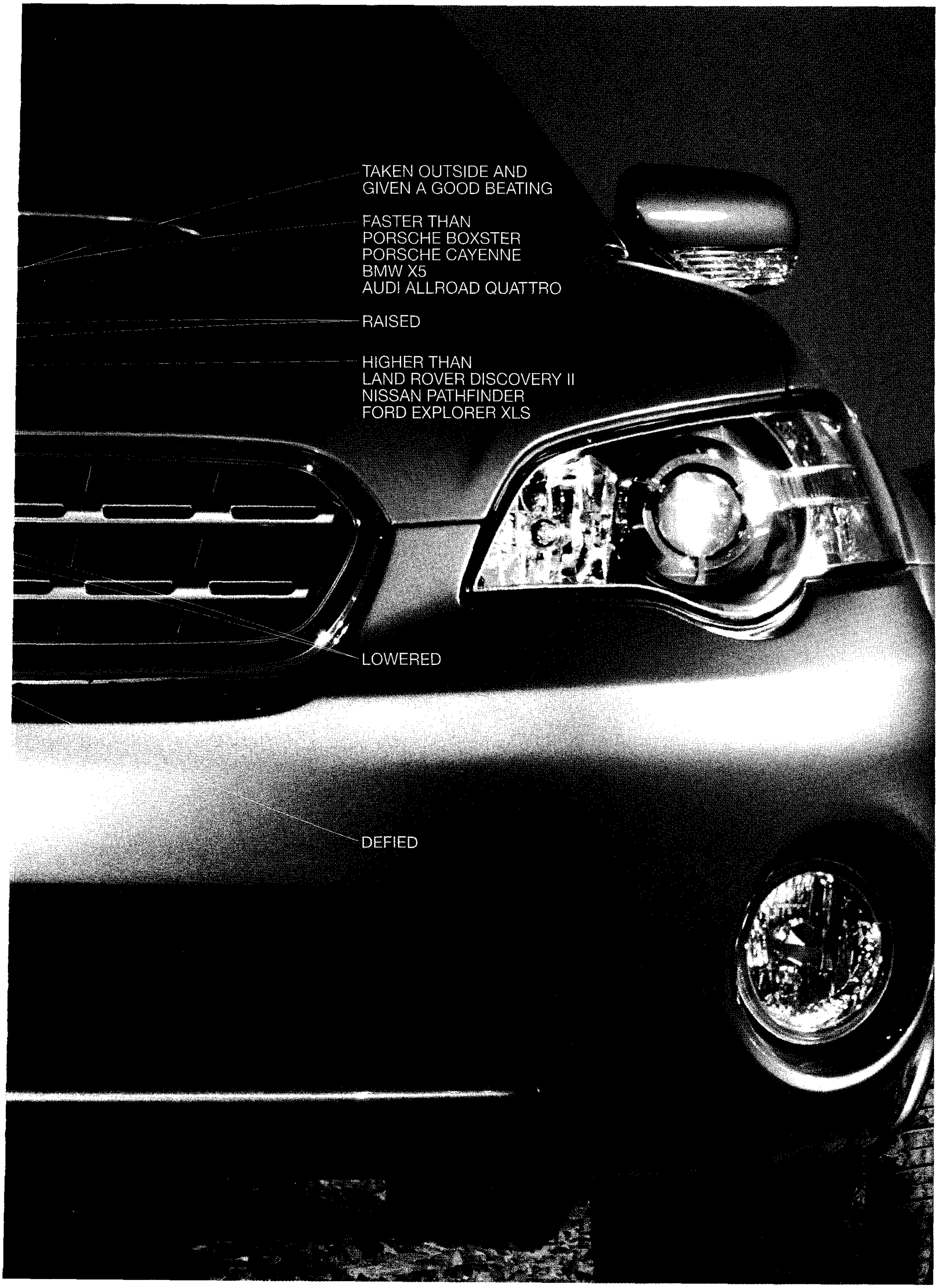

TAKEN OUTSIDE AND
GIVEN A GOOD BEATING

FASTER THAN
PORSCHE BOXSTER
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BMW X5
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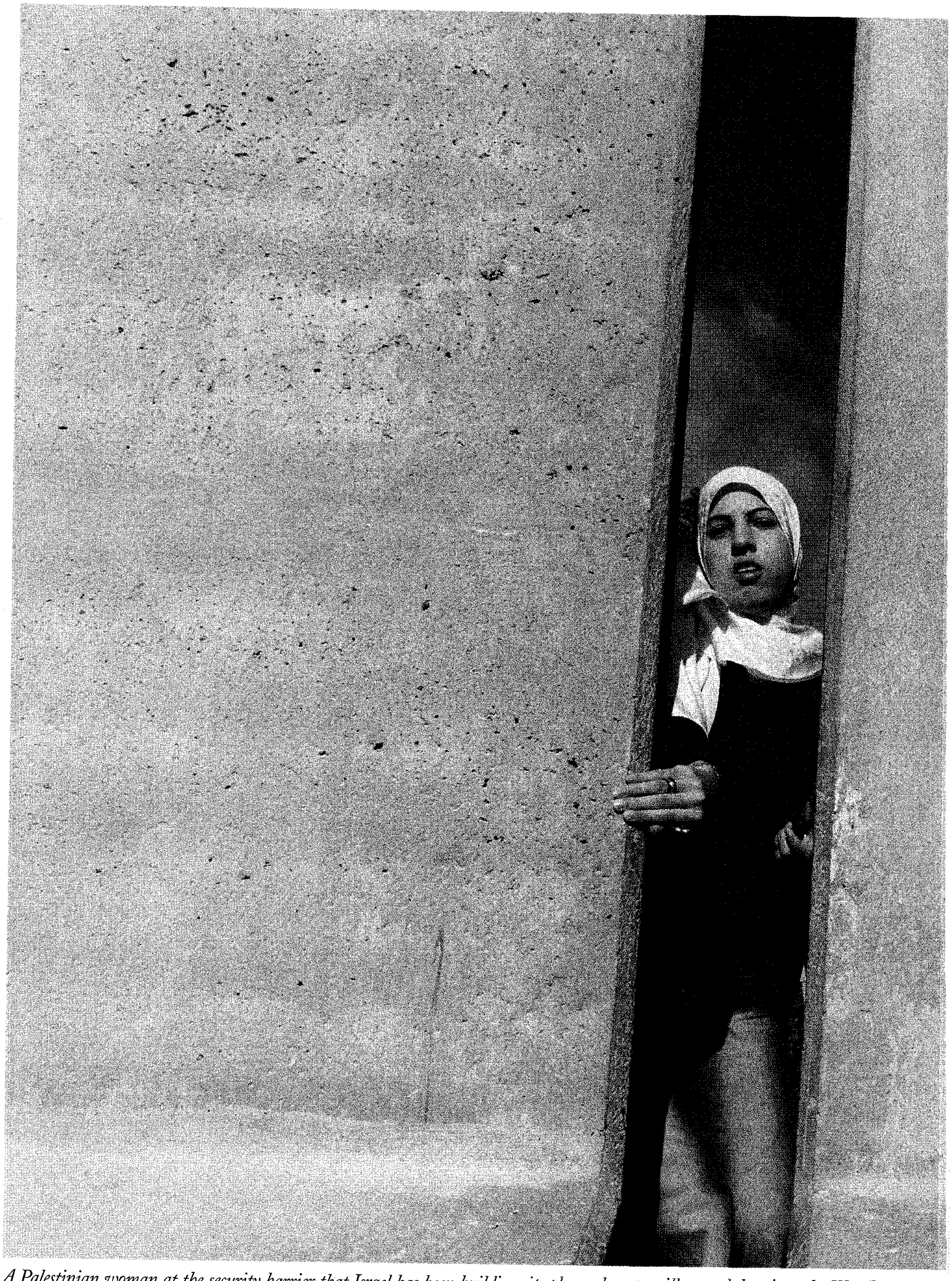
RAISED

HIGHER THAN
LAND ROVER DISCOVERY II
NISSAN PATHFINDER
FORD EXPLORER XLS

LOWERED

DEFIED



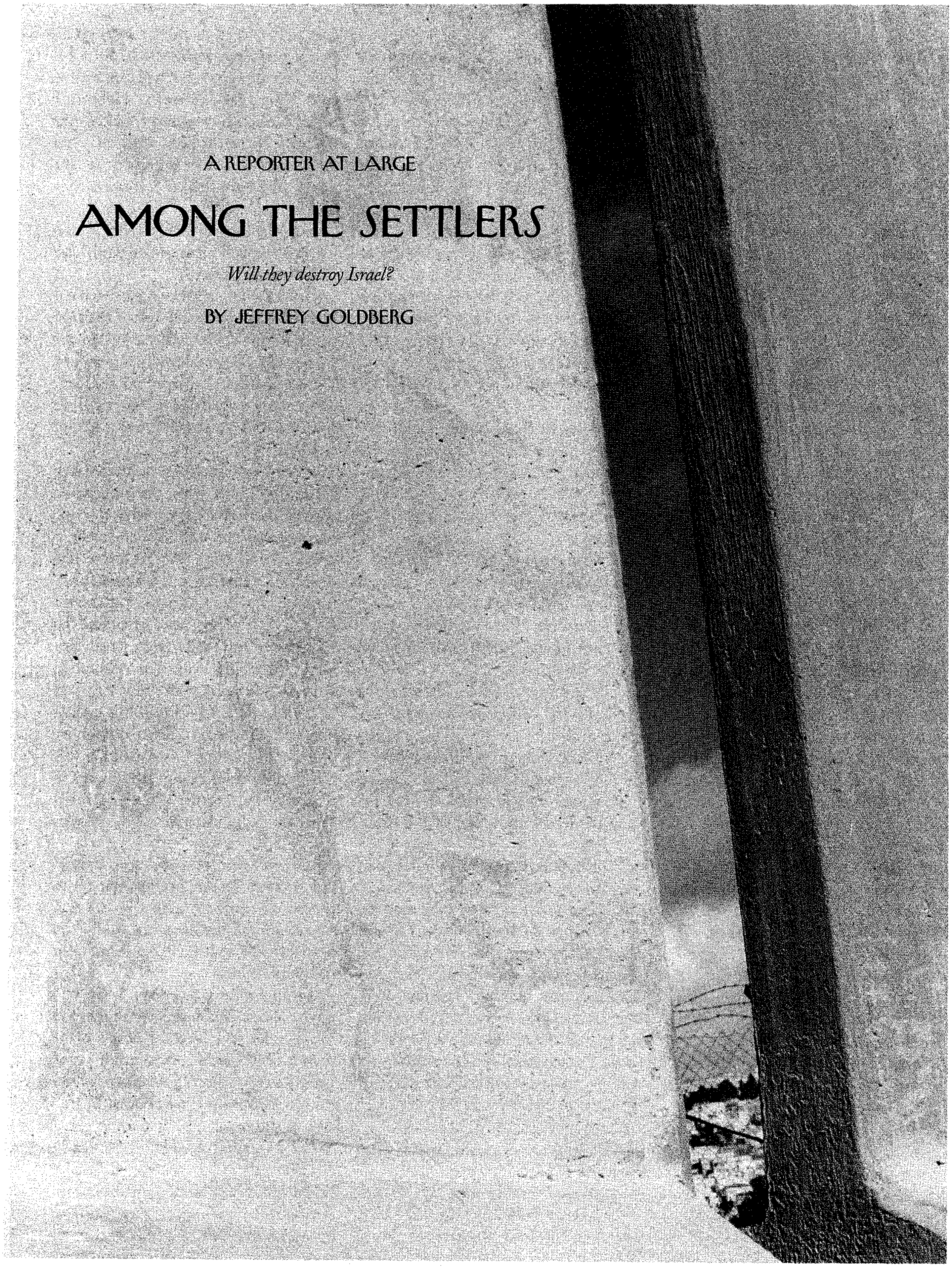
A Palestinian woman at the security barrier that Israel has been building; its planned route will extend deep into the West Bank. "All

A REPORTER AT LARGE

AMONG THE SETTLERS

Will they destroy Israel?

BY JEFFREY GOLDBERG



this land is Jewish land," a settler said. "It is meant for the Jews by God himself." Photographs by Gilles Peress.

On a late winter's day, a slight, blue-eyed boy rode a bicycle down an empty street in the militant Jewish ghetto of Hebron, in the West Bank. Clipped to the boy's hair was a green *kipa*, crocheted and oversized in the style of the settlers. A damp wind was blowing, and a bank of clouds hovered over the city, but the boy was jacketless. Scattered piles of rubble and garbage, flecked with broken glass, lined the road.

The buildings along what the Jews call King David Street and the Arabs call Martyrdom Street are tightly packed and decaying. The Jews live mainly on the east side of the street, and the Arabs live to the west. When I visited, much of the area was under curfew. The Jewish zone, where some Arabs live, is "sterile," a soldier told me: only Arabs who hold the proper pass are allowed to enter. The soldier, a paratrooper in the Israeli Army's Fighting Pioneer Youth Brigade, was guarding Hadassah House, a three-story building where several families of settlers live. A brigade of soldiers, coils of razor wire, and hundreds of concrete barriers stand between Hebron's fewer than eight hundred Jewish settlers and its hundred and fifty thousand Arab residents.

Across from Hadassah House is a school for Arab girls, called Córdoba, after the once-Muslim Spanish city. On one of its doors someone had drawn a blue Star of David. On another door a yellowing bumper sticker read, "Dr. Goldstein Cures the Ills of Israel." The reference is to Baruch Goldstein, a physician from Brooklyn, who, in 1994, killed twenty-nine Muslims when they were praying in the Tomb of the Patriarchs, just down the road. Across the closed door of a Palestinian shop someone had written, in English, "Arabs Are Sand Niggers."

Jewish invective is answered by Muslim insults; over another door was a hand-painted verse from the Koran, attesting to the undying perfidy of the Jews. Nearby, peeling off a wall, was a poster dedicated to a ten-month-old Jewish girl named Shalhevet Pass, who was shot through the head three years ago by a Palestinian sniper. "May God Avenge Her Blood," it read. Pass's father is in jail in Israel; last July, the police found eight bricks of explosives in the trunk of his car.

A group of yeshiva students appeared, walking in the direction of the Tomb of the Patriarchs, a two-thousand-year-old stone palace. It sits atop the cave in which, tradition holds, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and their wives are buried. It is because of the tomb that Hebron is considered a holy city. The yeshiva boys wore flannel shirts and jeans. They had the wispy beards of young men who have never shaved.

Two Arab girls, their heads covered by scarves, books clutched to their chests, left the Córdoba School, and were walking toward the yeshiva boys.

"Cunts!" one of the boys yelled, in Arabic.

"Do you let your brothers fuck you?" another one yelled. I stopped one of the students and asked why he was cursing the girls. He was red-faced, and his black hair was covered with a blue knit skullcap.

"What are you, a goy?" he asked.

The girls fled down the street, and the boys disappeared. I asked the soldier guarding Hadassah House why he hadn't intervened. "They didn't hurt them," he said.

The boy on the bicycle circled toward me and asked what I was doing there. I told him that I was waiting for a woman named Anat Cohen. He said that she was his mother, and that she had just gone to the market. Then he pedalled away, toward barricades at the end of the street.

Cohen pulled up a few minutes later, in a station wagon, its windshield cracked from stone-throwing attacks. She is one of the leaders of the Hebron Jews. A short woman in her early forties, she had a taut, windburned face and muscular arms, and her fingernails were chewed and dirty. As we walked through her front door, into a stone-walled living room, I asked her how she could let her son play amid the barbed wire and soldiers and barricades, and with snipers in the hills above.

"Hebron is ours," she said. "Why shouldn't he play?"

"Because he could get killed," I said.

"There's a bullet out there for each one of us," she said. "But you can always die. At least his death here would sanctify God's name."

Cohen and other settlers say that they are obliged to fulfill God's command that Jews settle the land of Israel. But there are safer places to live than King David Street in Hebron. I asked Cohen how she reconciled her decision to settle here with an even greater imperative of Judaism, the saving of lives—in this case, those of her children.

She glared at me. "Hellenizers"—secular Jews—"will never understand," she said with contempt.

Anat Cohen is known, even among Hebron's Jews, who are some of the least placatory of all the settlers, for her ferocity. According to Army commanders, she has cursed and insulted soldiers, and assaulted Arabs. The first time we met, she told me that she was a soldier of God.

Cohen has about ten children—like certain religious Jews, she refused to specify the number, in order to confuse the evil eye. The Cohen house is cramped and dark, and there are few toys. On one wall hangs a framed photograph of Meir Kahane, the zealot rabbi from Brooklyn, who advocated the expulsion of all Arabs from Israel. Behind a stone pillar hangs a photograph of Baruch Goldstein, with the inscription "The Saint Dr. Goldstein." A candle burned in a makeshift shrine, in memory of Cohen's brother, Gilad Zar. He was the security chief of the settlements in Samaria, the territory of the northern West Bank. He was killed three years ago by terrorists.

Cohen's one-year-old son, who is named after her late brother, burst into the room, spilling Cheerios. Cohen swept him off the floor, and said, "You don't live just to keep living. That's not the point of life."

In an earlier conversation, we had talked about Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son Isaac, at God's command; only God's intervention saved Isaac. Cohen admired Abraham's dedication, unabashedly. She was, I came to see, suffering from something that could be called a Moriah complex. Mt. Moriah, in Jerusalem, is the traditional site of the binding of Isaac, and symbolizes a Jew's absolute devotion to even the most inexplicable and cruel demands of God. The First and Second Jewish Temples rose on Mt. Moriah. So, later, did the Dome of the Rock, built on the site from which, Muslims believe, Muhammad ascended to Heaven. (In Cohen's house, there is an image of the Temple Mount in which the Dome of the Rock has been replaced by a rendering of an imagined Third Temple, which, tradition holds, will rise when the Messiah comes.) The Moriah complex is characterized by a desire to match Abraham's devotion to God, even at the price of a child's life.

Cohen brought up the story, from the Second Book of the Maccabees, of a God-loving mother of seven boys, partisans in the Jewish revolt against Hellenistic rule twenty-two hundred years ago. The boys were called before King Antiochus, who ordered them to eat swine, as a loyalty test. The sons refused.

"Do you know what the Greeks did to these boys?" Cohen asked. "They ripped out their tongues and boiled them alive."

Just before the last son was martyred, the mother gave him a message to deliver in Heaven: "Go and say to your father Abraham, 'Thou didst bind one son to the altar, but I have bound seven altars.' "

After the seventh son was killed, the mother threw herself off a roof. The Talmud says that, on her death, a voice was heard from Heaven, singing, "A happy mother of children."

One afternoon, I went to the Tomb of the Patriarchs. The detachment of Border Police that day was commanded by an Ethiopian immigrant who was wearing a knit *kipa*. He seemed tense; Rabbi Levinger, he said, was inside. Moshe Levinger, who is in his sixties, is Hebron's first Jewish settler, a fierce man, and a source of vexation for the Army and the police.

A flight of broad stone steps leads to the main hall of the tomb. The Muslim rulers of Hebron once banned Jews from climbing higher than the seventh step. Levinger was the first modern-day Jewish settler in Hebron, but there were Jews in Hebron before Islam was founded. In 1929, a pogrom erased the Jewish presence, when sixty-seven Jews were murdered by their Arab neighbors. The British, then in charge of Palestine, removed the Jewish survivors from Hebron, for their own safety. I entered the main prayer hall. Benches that had been placed in rows in front of an Ark were mostly empty. Elderly men prayed alone. Underneath the stone floor, in the double-chambered Cave of the Machpelah, the bones of the Jewish patriarchs and matriarchs are said to rest. According to Genesis, Abraham bought the cave as a burial place for his wife, Sarah. It was his first, fateful purchase of land in Canaan.

Rabbi Levinger approached. For many years, he has been the face of the settlement movement, which is no favor; his head is small, but his eyes are bulbous and his teeth outsized. His voice is deep, and his beard seems constructed of iron shavings. I said hello. He grunted a reply.

I told him that the police seemed uneasy about his presence in the tomb, and I asked whether they were worried that he would lash out at the Palestinians.

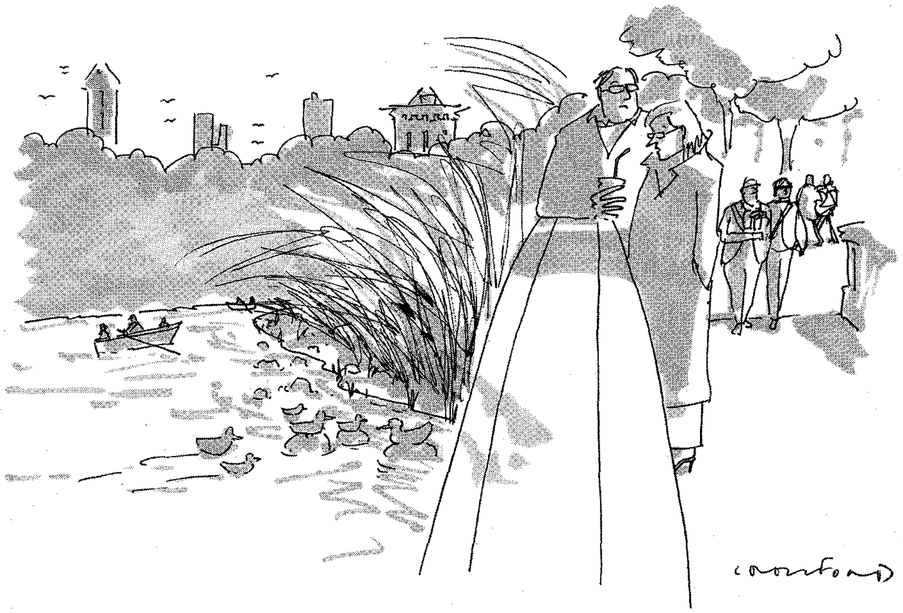
"The Arabs know to behave like good boys around us," he said.

Levinger first came to Hebron in 1968, after Israel seized the West Bank in the Six-Day War. He rented rooms in an Arab hotel, in order to hold a Passover Seder. Then he refused to leave. He struck a deal with the Israeli government, and moved his family and his followers to a hill just northeast of Hebron, where, with the state's coöperation, they built the settlement called Kiryat Arba. There are now seven thousand settlers there. In 1979, his wife, Miriam, led a group of settler women in an unruly takeover of the Hadassah House building. The squatters stayed, and a community grew up around them.

In 1988, Levinger killed a Palestinian shoe-store owner in Hebron. Levinger told the police that he was defending himself from a group of stone throwers. He served thirteen weeks in an Israeli jail for the killing. He told me once, "I'm not happy when any living creature dies—an Arab, a fly, a donkey."

In the Israel he envisaged, Levinger said, Arabs would be allowed to stay only so long as they "behave themselves. Foreign residents"—Levinger's designation for Arabs—"will be allowed to stay in Israel if they follow our laws and don't demand privileges." He added that they might vote "for mayors and such" but not for Prime Minister. He did not believe that the Arabs would acquiesce to such an arrangement, and that is why he advocated "transfer"—a euphemism for mass expulsion. "Whoever hurts Jews will be expelled," he said.

I had first met Levinger last year, at his small apartment in Hebron, and I had asked him to help me understand the scriptural basis for his claim to the city, and to all of the Biblical land of Israel. He reached into a bookshelf and



"Every Sunday, the same thing: we watch the ducks from Bow Bridge, I think about pushing you in, and then we go to that stupid Mexican place."

brought down the Torah, the five books of Moses, and opened it to Genesis.

"I will read you a verse," he said. " 'Now the Lord said to Abraham, get out of the country, and from the kindred, and from the father's house, to the land that I will show you, I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, and you shall be a blessing, and I will bless them that bless you, and curse them that curse you.' "

Levinger looked up. "Shall I read more?

"All my ideas are formed from the Torah," he went on. "It's not complex. This land is ours. God gave it to us. We're the owners of the land."

Moshe Levinger, the first settler in Hebron, advocates the "transfer" of Palestinians who don't "behave themselves."

In June, 1967, Israel launched successful preëmptive strikes against Egypt and Syria, which had been jointly planning an invasion. When Jordan, which then occupied the West Bank, entered the war on the side of the Syrians and the Egyptians, Israel defeated it as well, seizing the Old City of Jerusalem and the West Bank. Israel's victory also left it in control of the Golan Heights, Gaza, and the Sinai Peninsula (which was returned to Egypt in 1982). Thirty-seven years later, there are roughly two hundred and thirty-five thousand settlers in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. There are an additional hundred and eighty thousand Israelis living on land in eastern Jerusalem, captured in the 1967 war. Israel's Jewish population is about five million; more than a million Israeli citizens are Arab. The West Bank and the Gaza Strip are home to more than three and a half million additional Arabs, who do not hold Israeli citizenship.

Perhaps three-quarters of the Jews in the West Bank and Gaza could be considered economic settlers. Many of them moved to the West Bank for benefits unattainable inside the pre-1967 borders of Israel: space, tax breaks, and mountain air. They are reliable supporters of right-wing parties, but many of them are secular in their outlook.

The remainder of the settlers, fifty thousand or so, came to the territories for reasons of faith. Although many of the settlements are near the Green Line, the 1949 armistice line that separated Israel from the West Bank, the national-religious settlements tend to be isolated from Israel and from each other. Many of them are along Route 60, the main north-south highway that runs near the mountain spine of the West Bank. This is the heart of the land known in the Bible as Judaea and Samaria—the part of ancient Israel most thickly crowded with sites that figure in Jewish history. It is also the part of the West Bank most densely populated by Arabs.

The national-religious camp can be divided into two main groups. The Jews of the central West Bank, in settlements such as Beit El and Ofra, are Biblical literalists, but they tend to respect the authority of the elected government in Jerusalem. If the Israeli Army evacuated such settlements—and this is not happening soon—the people might resist, but it is believed that they will not shoot.

The more unremitting settlers are the Jews living in Hebron, in Kiryat Arba, and in a chain of settlements in the mountains near Nablus, the main Arab city in the northern West Bank. The zealots include those who build "illegal" frontier outposts, which are not approved by the Israeli Cabinet, although they are protected by the Army. Most international legal authorities believe that all settlements, including those built with the permission of the Israeli government, are illegal.

The seventy-five hundred Jews of Gaza represent the absurdist wing of the settlement movement. In the Israeli mind, Gaza—a strip of land shaped like a sardine can, and running from south of Tel Aviv to the Egyptian border—is synonymous with sand dunes and refugee camps, wilting heat and the fierce anti-Semitism of the Islamic terror group Hamas, whose most fervent followers are based there. Gaza is marginal to Jewish history; its biggest moment came when Samson pulled the temple of the Philistines there down on his head. The most isolated settlers are those in Gaza. They are killed regularly by terror groups (over all, a hundred and fifty settlers have been killed); their school buses are armored, a precaution that hasn't prevented their occasional demolition; and they require the presence of thousands of Israeli soldiers, who are also being killed in consequential numbers.

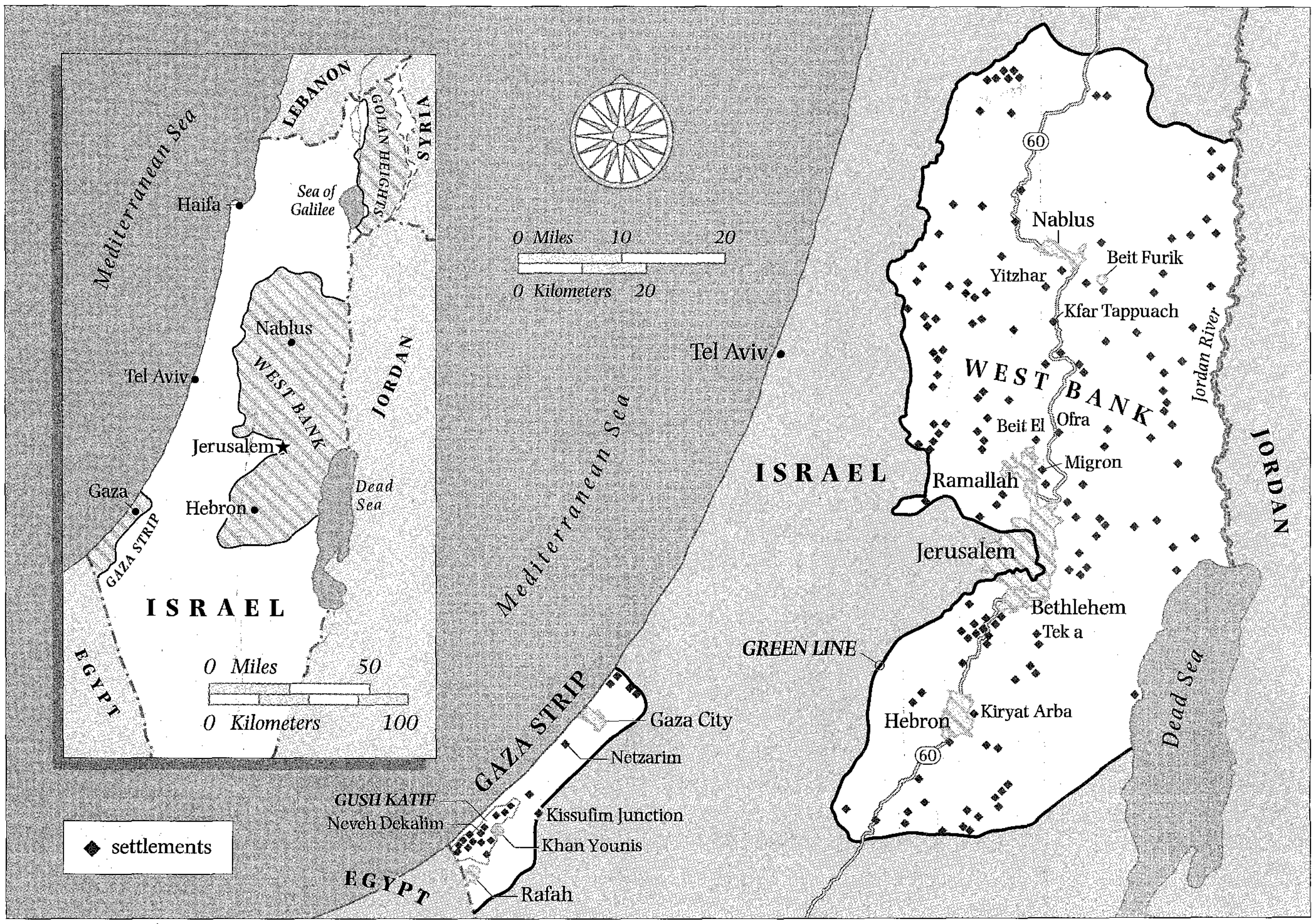
The most hard-core settlers are impatient messianists, who profess indifference, even scorn, for the state; a faith in vigilantism; and loathing for the Arabs. They are free of doubt, seeing themselves as taking orders from God, and are an unusually cohesive segment of Israeli society. Hard-core settlers and their supporters make up perhaps two per cent of the Israeli populace, but they nevertheless have driven Israeli policy in the occupied territories for much of the past thirty years.

The settlement movement has long been aided by Israel's parliamentary system, which gives single-issue parties an inordinate say in government decisions. The movement has also been effective at placing supporters in key government ministries. And it has been helped by the doubt that many secular Israelis feel about the Palestinians' willingness to recognize the legitimacy of a Jewish state—and by anger at Palestinian violence.

Many Israelis believe that evacuation of many settlements—even all of the settlements—would not satisfy the Palestinians. The Palestinian leader Yasir Arafat, even while negotiating with Israel in the framework of the Oslo accords of the nineteen-nineties, never prepared his people for compromise. Palestinian schools continued to teach about the evils not only of occupation but of the very idea of Israel. Arafat refused to recognize any historical Jewish connection to Palestine, and, in the climactic negotiations at Camp David in 2000, he rejected Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak's offer of the entire Gaza Strip, nearly all of the West Bank, and a capital in east Jerusalem, and abandoned the talks. Many of Barak's critics accused the Prime Minister of mishandling the negotiations and of making miserly concessions that were impossible for Arafat to accept. But the dispositive fact of Camp David is this: Barak made an offer, and Arafat walked out without making a counter-offer. Three months later, after Ariel Sharon, then the leader of the opposition Likud Party, visited the Temple Mount, surrounded by Israeli police, the Palestinians ignited the second intifada, which continues today. Sharon capitalized on

Anat Cohen, a leader of the Hebron Jews, says of the dangers facing her son, "At least his death here would sanctify God's name."

the violence in 2001, defeating the compromise-minded Barak in the election for Prime Minister.



Mediterranean Sea
LEBANON
GOLAN HEIGHTS
SYRIA
Haifa
Sea of Galilee
Nablus
WEST BANK
JORDAN
Tel Aviv
Jerusalem
Gaza
Hebron
Dead Sea
GAZA STRIP
ISRAEL
EGYPT
0 Miles 50
0 Kilometers 100
0 Miles 10 20
0 Kilometers 20
Tel Aviv
Mediterranean Sea
ISRAEL
GREEN LINE
GAZA STRIP
Gaza City
Netzarim
GUSH KATIF
Neveh Dekalim
Kissufim Junction
Khan Younis
Rafah
EGYPT
◆ settlements
60
Nablus
Beit Furik
Yitzhar
Kfar Tappuach
WEST BANK
Beit El
Ofra
Migron
Ramallah
Jerusalem
Bethlehem
Tek a
Hebron
Kiryat Arba
60
Jordan River
Dead Sea
JORDAN

JEFFREY L. WARD

Polls have consistently shown that the majority of Israelis want the settlers to withdraw from Gaza in particular. Sharon had told me while he was campaigning, "The settlements represent the best of Israel. To abandon them would go against Jewish history and morality." And yet, three years later, Sharon has turned against some of the settlers, and is now proposing to evacuate settlements in Gaza and the northern West Bank.

Sharon seems to have recognized—belatedly—Israel's stark demographic future: the number of Jews and Arabs between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea will be roughly equal by the end of the decade. By 2020, the Israeli demographer Sergio Della Pergola has predicted, Jews will make up less than forty-seven per cent of the population. If a self-sustaining Palestinian state—one that is territorially contiguous within the West Bank—does not emerge, the Jews of Israel will be faced with two choices: a binational state with an Arab majority, which would be the end of the idea of Zionism, or an apartheid state, in which the Arab majority would be ruled by a Jewish minority.

A de-facto apartheid already exists in the West Bank. Inside the borders of Israel proper, Arabs and Jews are judged by the same set of laws in the same courtrooms; across the Green Line, Jews live under Israeli civil law as well, but their Arab neighbors—people who live, in some cases, just yards away—fall under a different, and substantially undemocratic, set of laws, administered by the Israeli Army. The system is neither as elaborate nor as pervasive as South African apartheid, and it is, officially, temporary. It is nevertheless a form of apartheid, because two different ethnic groups living in the same territory are judged by two separate sets of laws.

Sharon is considered to be one of the most effective fighters in Israel's history (he is certainly thought to be one of the most brutal). He came to power promising to use force in order to end Palestinian violence. But he has not succeeded. What he is proposing now is a two-pronged survival strategy: the building of a security fence separating the Arabs of the West Bank from Israel; and a unilateral withdrawal from Gaza, which will remove more than a million Palestinians from Israel's direct control. "The Palestinians have created this bloody mess," the Vice-Prime Minister, Ehud Olmert, told me recently. But, he added, "We realized long ago we would have to share this land."

This is not to say that Sharon and his party, the Likud, have done much to encourage negotiations. Sharon's proposals are not anchored in any larger peace plan. At best, the proposals are half measures. The fence will not follow the Green Line; in places it will penetrate deep into the West Bank, encompassing highly populated settlement blocs. Most settlements beyond the fence will remain in place as well, as will battalions of soldiers to protect them. In Gaza, Israel will still control the borders, the coastal waters, and the airspace, making it, in essence, a recalcitrant protectorate.

Modest though these measures seem to many Israelis (they are seen as comically parsimonious by most Palestinians), to the settlement movement they are a betrayal. The borders of Israel, in the view of Jewish religious nationalists, are drawn by God, and one does not negotiate with God. So the settlers have, golem-like, risen against one of their creators, and pledged to stop any attempt—including Sharon's provisional attempt—to disentangle Jews and Arabs. The settlers reject the idea of a demographic crisis. They still see themselves as Sharon once saw them—as the avant-garde of Zionism, heirs to the pioneers of the early twentieth century who restored the Jews to Palestine. But, should they somehow prevent the emergence of a viable Palestinian state, they may well be the vanguard of Israel's demise as a Jewish democracy.

They are, for the moment, prevailing. Earlier this month, the settlers humiliated Sharon, organizing the defeat, in a Likud Party referendum, of a plan to evacuate seventeen settlements in the Gaza Strip. Sharon has promised to pursue some version of his evacuation plan, but this pursuit might cause his coalition government to break apart.

The harshest critic of the settlers in the government is Tommy Lapid, the justice minister. He heads the Shinui Party, which argues for the separation of synagogue and state and is a member of Sharon's ruling coalition. He told me recently that the settlers have three reasons for hope: "They believe there will come a point in the critical clash between us and the Palestinians when it would come time to transfer the Palestinians to Jordan; the second thing they hope for is the great American aliyah—a million more Jews coming to Israel. The third, and by far the most stupid, thing is that they believe God will help them."

Indeed, some of the leading ideologues of the settlements, far from supporting the idea of a Jewish democracy, hope to establish a Jewish theocracy in Israel, ruled by a Sanhedrin and governed by Jewish law. Moshe Feiglin, a Likud activist who lives in a West Bank settlement and heads the Jewish Leadership bloc within the Party—he controls nearly a hundred and fifty of the Likud central committee's three thousand members—believes that the Bible, interpreted literally, should form the basis of Israel's legal system. "Why should non-Jews have a say in the policy of a Jewish state?" Feiglin said to me. "For two thousand years, Jews dreamed of a Jewish state, not a democratic state. Democracy should serve the values of the state, not destroy them." In any case, Feiglin said, "You can't teach a monkey to speak and you can't teach an Arab to be democratic. You're dealing with a culture of thieves and robbers. Muhammad, their prophet, was a robber and a killer and a liar. The Arab destroys everything he touches."

The community of Yitzhar, in the mountains near Nablus, is one of the flagship settlements of the zealots. I went there one day in search of Yehuda Liebman, an official of the Joseph Still Lives Yeshiva. Until the second intifada, the yeshiva had been situated next to the tomb that many Jews believe holds the remains of Joseph, the son of Jacob, in Nablus. During the Oslo peace process, which ended the first intifada, Yasir Arafat promised Israel that the Palestinian Authority would protect Jewish holy sites that came under its control, but the Joseph's Tomb compound was torched and vandalized by Palestinian militias a number of times, and the yeshiva moved to Yitzhar.

I was told that I could find Liebman at an outpost down a gravel road from the main settlement. The outpost, called Yitzhar Lookout, consisted of two mobile homes and a temporary synagogue. The buildings sat on a gently sloping hill. Halfway down were olive trees that belong to the neighboring Arab villages of Ein-Abus and Burin. Settlers from Yitzhar have repeatedly attacked these olive trees. When I visited, the branches of trees just below the outpost looked as though they had recently been sawed off. A Palestinian farmer named Ibrahim Muhammad Zaban had told me that he no longer brought his children to help during the olive harvest. "The settlers come and they curse at us and attack us. They beat up a man with a metal pipe." The settlers, he said, stole the olives, then burned the trees. "These trees were for my sons," he said. His children had lost their inheritance, and he had lost his livelihood. "I have to work in another man's fields now," he said.

As I looked for Liebman, I came across David Dudkevitch, a rabbi in Yitzhar. Dudkevitch, a sour-faced man in his thirties who was dressed in a black suit and a white shirt, is a person of influence among yet another type of radical settler, the "hilltop youth"—teen-agers and young men who have built makeshift settlements, sometimes out of nothing more than rusting shipping containers, on remote mountaintops. They are seen as troublemakers by the Israeli Army and the Palestinians, but some settlers consider them heroic. Many of the hilltop youth are unruly high-school dropouts who are fluent in the mystical concepts of the Kabbalah and are adept in marksmanship. They also have a reputation for marijuana use.

I asked Dudkevitch whether the youth of Yitzhar were cutting down the Arabs' olive trees.

"I'm not hearing you," he replied. I asked again. "I'm not hearing what you're saying. You don't understand me. I'm not hearing and I will continue not to hear." Then he walked away.

Liebman was outside one of the ramshackle trailers, talking on a cell phone. He is a thin and jumpy man, quick to show irritation. One of his brothers was murdered in Yitzhar six years ago by Arabs. Another brother was accused by the Shabak, the Israeli internal security agency, of being a member of a Jewish terrorist network.

I asked who was destroying the olive trees. The destruction of fruit-giving trees, even those belonging to an enemy, is considered a grave sin in Judaism. But the only subject that concerned Liebman was Joseph's Tomb.

"What is an olive tree compared to the burial place of Joseph, the son of Jacob?" he said.

To the farmer who supports his family with the tree, I said, the tree is important.

"But the farmer is an *Arab*," Liebman replied. "He shouldn't be here at all. All this land is Jewish land. It is meant for the Jews by God Himself."

And if the Army comes to carry off the Jews of Yitzhar?

"Let them try," he said.

In May, more than eight hundred Israeli soldiers and policemen attempted to dismantle the outpost. They were confronted by seven hundred settlers, who fought them for several hours. Forty-one settlers were arrested, before the outpost was torn down. After the police left, the settlers returned, and erected two new buildings.

One day a few months ago, Moshe Saperstein, who lives in Neveh Dekalim, the biggest Jewish settlement in Gaza, picked me up at the junction that marks the border between Gaza and Israel. The junction, called Kissufim, is an armored camp. Three dozen tanks and bulldozers were lined up in order to pass through the gates. The only civilians here are the settlers of the Gush Katif bloc, a string of settlements—Neveh Dekalim among them—along the beaches of southern Gaza, between the Palestinian city of Khan Younis and the Mediterranean.

Saperstein was born on the Lower East Side of Manhattan, and came to Israel thirty-six years ago with his wife, Rachel, who is originally from Brooklyn. As a soldier in the 1973 Yom Kippur War, he lost part of an arm and part of his vision in an Egyptian rocket attack. He is a heavyset man who smokes bad cigars and has perhaps the most profane mouth in Orthodox Judaism.

The road from the border to the settlement is under Israeli control—concrete pillboxes are planted intermittently along the way—but Palestinians regularly fire on the settlers' cars. Two years ago, Saperstein was ambushed near Kissufim; Palestinian gunfire tore off two fingers of his remaining hand. He had the presence of mind to push down on the accelerator, and struck a Palestinian gunman.

As we drove, Saperstein pointed to the spot on the road where the attack had taken place. "Here's where I tried to run over the peace-loving Muslim," he said. Sometimes, he told me, he gets the feeling that "Ahmed is trying to kill me." Saperstein refers to Arabs generically as "Ahmed."

Just before we reached the fortified entrance to the Gush Katif bloc, we passed the ramshackle Bedouin village of Muwassi. "They like to live like pigs in shit," Saperstein said. I disagreed, vehemently, and he said, "I'm sorry, that's politically incorrect. 'They have a different cultural aesthetic.' Is that what I'm supposed to say?"

The Sapersteins came to Neveh Dekalim to retire; their children are grown, and live elsewhere in Israel. The couple's ranch house, which overlooks the sea, would not look out of place in the Jewish neighborhoods of South Florida. The settlement is a community of dozens of whitewashed houses and sand-dune playgrounds, and it is the frequent target of Palestinian attacks. A fifty-foot wall of concrete slabs sits about five hundred yards from the Sapersteins' house, separating the Jews from the Arabs.

Over lunch, I asked Saperstein and Rachel, who teaches English in the settlement's girls' school, why they had chosen a remote and dangerous settlement in Gaza rather than one of the urban settlements near Jerusalem. "We like the weather," he said. "We never lived near the sea. And I'm here because of a religious commandment, believe it or not, as irrational as that may seem to you." The Sapersteins see a unilateral pullout from Gaza as theological heresy and political suicide. They moved here from Jerusalem in 1997, as a protest against the Oslo peace process. "Oslo meant the abandonment of land that was meant for the Jews," Saperstein said. "In this respect, I'm a fundamentalist. . . . Call me an extremist. I don't care."

I raised the question of whether Jewish parents who place their children within range of Palestinian rockets had their priorities in order. Exasperated, Rachel said, "If I believe in holy law, that the settlement of the land of Israel is a commandment of God, and I want my children to be raised as Jews, I have to take them where they're going to fulfill this mitzvah. I have to take my child and physically he has to settle the land with me. I can't say I won't do things because I don't want him to suffer."

Saperstein said, "If I believed that if all the settlers disappeared tomorrow then peace and happiness would reign forever, that we could live in peace as Jews in what's left of our homeland, then I would seriously consider picking up and going somewhere else."

Rachel looked at her husband.

"I wouldn't," she said.

Saperstein is skeptical about this scenario, however. He considers the idea that peace will come to Israel only when it cedes territory to the Arabs to be a Diaspora psychosis. "We've lived for so many years in exile, we've forgotten what it is to be a powerful and ruling people," he said. "We have always depended on the kindness of strangers, wherever we were. The tsar, or some Polish landowner. We had to kiss ass because we couldn't defend ourselves. Now that we have the strength to defend ourselves, we don't know how.

"Most of this country has an exile mentality," Saperstein went on. "Most of the population here takes the attitude that the Jews are at fault. But what have we done to provoke those poor Palestinians?"

"Do we have to kill ourselves? Is that Jewish?" Rachel said. "You have to teach them: 'No more. You want to do evil, you're going to take the consequences.' This is what America did to Germany. You finish them. Bomb the hell out of them. Just bomb the hell out of them."

I asked Rachel about her youth, in the Brownsville section of Brooklyn.

"The blacks hit me, of course," she said.

"She doesn't know the difference between being hit and being hit on," Moshe said.

"They also did that," Rachel said.

"We were raised in a very Jewish area," she said. "Then the blacks came in and the Jews ran. The first blacks came in and the Jews flew out of there so fast. Everybody went to Crown Heights. I don't want to run away. I always see Jews running and running."

American-born settlers often recollect encounters with anti-Semitic roughnecks, and many of them see an explicit link between the Palestinians and the *shvartses*, a word I heard several times in interviews: the Jews were chased from Brooklyn, and they won't be chased again.

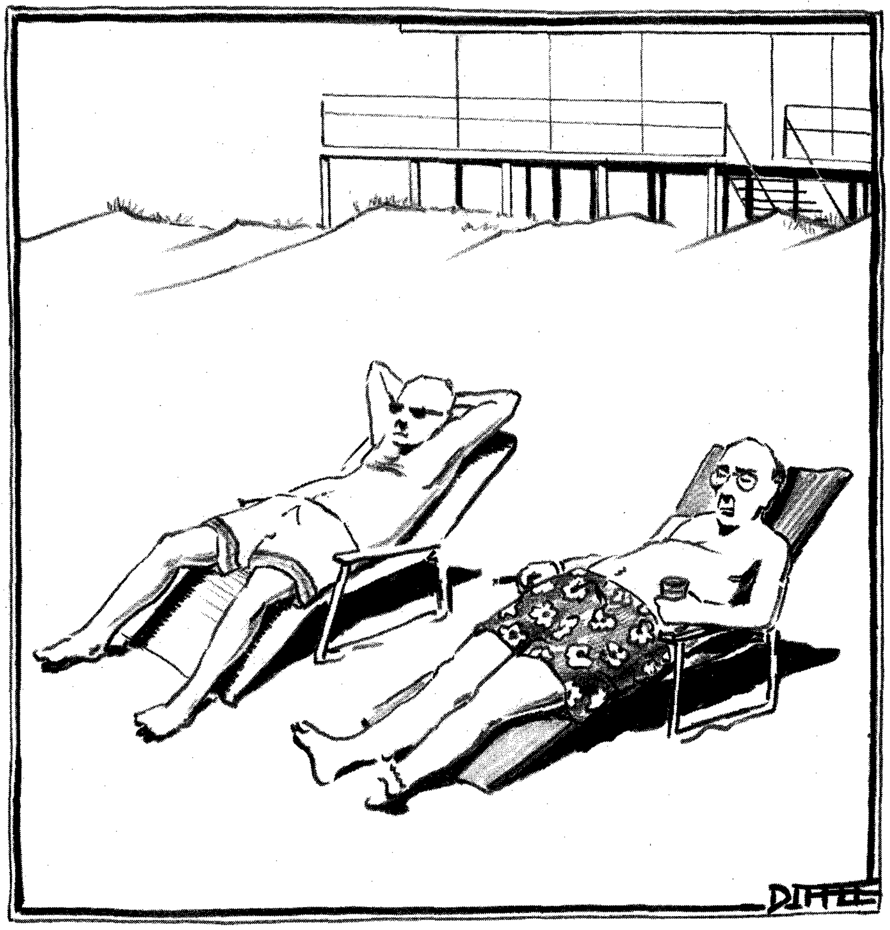
Saperstein, too, has a story of street anti-Semitism. "I was about ten or eleven. I looked out of our window. Some yeshiva guy was walking and these two drunk Italians started pushing him, yelling at him, slapping him. He just covered himself up. One of my parents yelled out the window, 'Police! Police!' They went away. Then my mother said, 'I wonder what he did to provoke that.'

"It was at that point I knew I had to come to the Jewish country and be proud. 'Goyim used their hands. Jews used their brains'—well, that's nothing more than a justification for weakness."

I suggested that he try to imagine himself in the place of a Palestinian. "You're a Palestinian, you're here, you have your farm, your grandparents are from here, and—"

But Moshe interrupted me. "*Stop being Jewish!*" he yelled. "Stop being Jewish! Only a Jew would say, 'Imagine yourself as a Palestinian.' Could you imagine a Palestinian imagining himself as a Jew?"

Neveh Dekalim is one of the settlements that Ariel Sharon has promised to shut down. What seemed to offend Saperstein most was that Arabs might one day live in his house. "I had this Ahmed in here once, doing repairs, and he said, 'Do you know why I'm doing such good work? Because one day I'm going to live here.' And I told him, 'If I'm kicked out of here, I'm going to blow this place up before I let someone like you have it.'"



"I try to be the wealthiest me I can be."

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THE MEANING OF ZIONISM

David Samson, who is a teacher at the Mercaz HaRav Yeshiva's high school, in Jerusalem, took me with him into the Judaean desert one Friday morning not long ago. He is a compact, sunburned man of forty-eight, white-bearded and serene. The yeshiva is dedicated to studying the teachings of two rabbis, Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook and his son, Tzvi Yehuda HaCohen Kook, who are the spiritual fathers of the settlement movement. Rabbi Samson is a former student of the second Rabbi Kook.

Samson and I left Jerusalem in his Daihatsu jeep, heading east, in the direction of the Dead Sea. He wore blue nylon hiking pants, all-terrain boots, a white *kipa*, and a pistol at his waist. Ten minutes past the settlement city of Ma'ale Adumim, on the steep descent into the Rift Valley, Samson turned onto a dust-covered track, and suddenly the desert enveloped us.

We drove under a shell-colored sky past albino camels standing next to the hulk of a destroyed tank, and through patches of scrub. The jeep kicked up a trail of dust that reached back a mile behind us. Past the brow of a high ridge, the entrance to a dry riverbed came into view. We left the jeep behind and hiked into a deep limestone canyon.

It is in this wilderness, Samson said, that the mind opens to visions of the Messiah. Judaism is a messianic religion, but most Jews—among those who give the Messiah any thought at all—wait patiently for His coming. To the followers of the Rabbis Kook, the Messiah is just over the next hill. "The demarcation point between this world and the next is the establishment of Israel," Rabbi Samson said. (Many Evangelical Christians, reading the same lines of the Bible, believe that the return of the Jews to the land of Israel presages the return of Christ.)

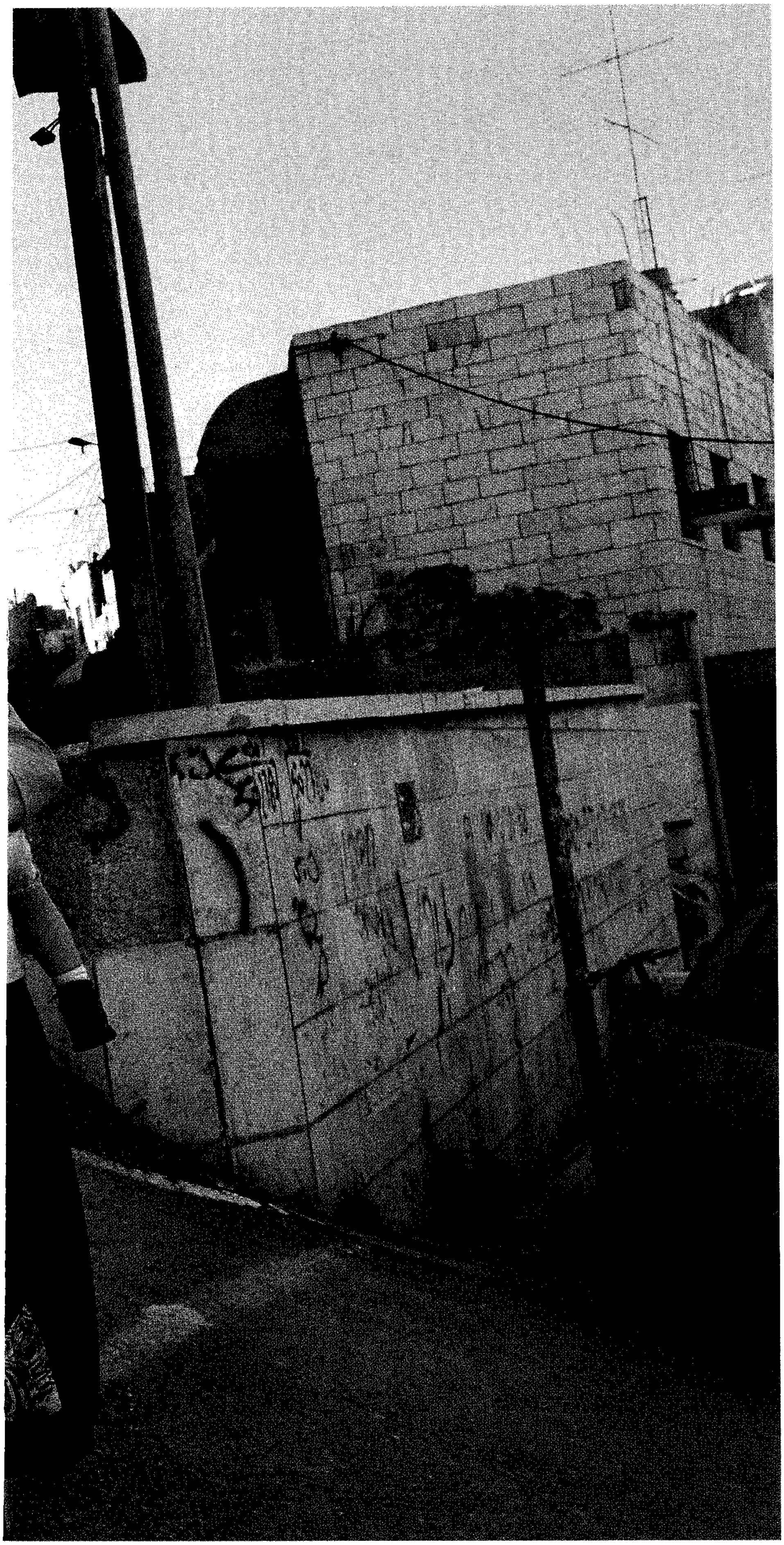
In "War and Peace," a book about the senior Rabbi Kook's beliefs, Rabbi Samson wrote:

> When the day comes for Israel to radiate its full power, there will be no room for usurpers who try to push the Jewish people aside. . . . All of the masqueraders who claimed to possess a monopoly on truth, whether Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, communism, capitalism, and all of the rest, will be exposed as empty flasks. When Judaism reaches its historical maturity with the return of the Kingdom of Israel, its holy culture will dominate the entire world psyche.

Zionism was not meant to be a messianic movement. It was the practical response of mainly irreligious men to the impossibility of Jewish life in Europe. Theodor Herzl, the father of political Zionism, saw a Jewish national home in Palestine as the answer to the rabid anti-Semitism he witnessed in the last decade of the nineteenth century, during the Dreyfus affair. The early Zionists drew on modern ideals of nationalism and liberal democracy, not on the teachings of rabbis.

Many Orthodox Jews, especially in the early days of Zionism, believed that Herzl and his comrades were heretics. The Jews would return to Zion, the Or-

Settlers near Hadassah House, on the street the Jews call King David Street and the Arabs call Martyrdom Street, in Hebron, whic



is home to almost eight hundred settlers and a hundred and fifty thousand Arabs.

thodox believed, only when God wanted them to.

The intellectual breakthrough of the first Rabbi Kook, who was the chief rabbi of the Jewish community in Palestine in the nineteen-twenties and thirties, was to see in Herzl not a heretic working against God but a man unknowingly guided *by* God. It was God who placed Zionism in the hearts of the disbelieving, just as it was God who gave the Gentiles the idea of nationalism. "God worked through the goyim to teach the Jews about the nation," Samson said. Even then, however, the Orthodox played only a small role in the founding, and building, of Israel, and secular Jews have dominated its government and Army ever since. It was the farmers of the socialist kibbutzim who came to symbolize the restored strength of the Jewish people.

In May, 1967, Rabbi Tzvi Yehuda Kook, delivering a sermon in honor of Israel's Independence Day, was seized by a vision that has become a touchstone for the settlers. "Where is our Hebron?" he cried out, according to witnesses. "Can we let it be forgotten? And where are our Shechem and our Jericho? Can we ever forsake them?" (Shechem was a Biblical city near present-day Nablus.)

Israel's sudden victory over its Arab neighbors in the Six-Day War, a month later, was attributed, by most Israelis, to the valor of its soldiers and the acumen of its generals. But many among the Orthodox saw it as a miracle—proof that the Redemption was at hand.

Although some members of Israel's Cabinet—notably, the future Likud Prime Minister Menachem Begin—believed from the start that the Biblically significant lands of the West Bank should be part of Israel, most secular Israelis thought that the territories would be given back to the Arabs in return for peace. This expectation changed after the Arab states, meeting in Khartoum in September of 1967, reaffirmed their opposition to the existence of a Jewish state of Israel, choosing continued confrontation instead.

The students of the second Rabbi Kook took advantage of the Arab rejection, and set out for the hills. (Moshe Levinger, the original Hebron settler, was one of Rabbi Kook's foremost disciples.) Within a few years, a Kookist group called Gush Emunim (the Bloc of the Faithful) was plotting the settlement of broad tracts of the Biblical heartland.

The settlement project succeeded only because secular Israelis continued to play the supporting role that Kook imagined for them. The ruling Labor Party, under the leadership of such men as Shimon Peres and Yitzhak Rabin, aided the project, seeing in the settlers a reflection of their own pioneering youth. They also discerned a strategic value to settlement; these *kipa*-wearing pioneers would keep watch over the newly conquered Arabs, and they would help protect Israel's middle—at its narrowest, Israel is nine miles wide.

Still, it was not until Begin became Prime Minister, in 1977, that the settlers found a partner who matched them in zeal. The Labor Party had built settlements mainly on the territories' periphery. Begin, guided by his agriculture minister, Ariel Sharon, began placing them on the outskirts of Arab cities such as Bethlehem, Nablus, and Ramallah. Gradually, the settlers crosshatched the West Bank and Gaza Strip with towns; they built industrial parks and yeshivas and even a college. Their children became, in some ways, the new kibbutzniks; today, they are disproportionately represented in the Israeli Army's top combat units. The settlers had more in mind than state-building. They were erecting, in the words of Exodus, a "kingdom of priests and a holy nation."

The Messiah has yet to appear (in the words of a famously cynical Israeli pop song, "He also hasn't telephoned"), and the majority of Israelis, according to the polls, would abandon most of the settlements for some semblance of peace. Rabbi Samson's faith, though, hasn't wavered. "I have this underlying belief that the land of Israel is stronger than the government of Israel," he said. "One month after Ehud Barak decided to give the Temple Mount to the Arabs, he was in his pajamas at home. I can say as a rabbi that God will not be happy with any Israeli government that tries to give away this land."

We sat for a while on the rocks. Orange-winged starlings flew above us. "God won't allow a Palestinian state to come into creation. And, if it does, He'll destroy it. God has placed the Arabs in the way of the Jews to test our resolve."

Israel's problem today, Rabbi Samson said, is that its Army refuses to fight in the manner of the ancient Jewish generals. "The Torah doesn't see a difference between civilians and the military. Until the Jewish people realize that we are fighting a nation that has vowed to destroy us, our mission won't be completed. If we were willing to kill their civilians, this war would be over in a week.

"I don't think mercy is playing its correct role here," he went on. "If the military operated without consideration for civilian deaths, think about how many lives would have been saved! In any case, their children are born with Molotov cocktails in their hands. These are a people as unfeeling as jackals."

"I'm donating a portion of your tip to charity."

Like many ideologues of aggressive settlement, Rabbi Samson drew lessons directly from the Bible, without the moderating influence of two thousand years of rabbinic Judaism. In the Bible, the heroes are warriors and killers; the Talmud, compiled after the destruction of the Temple and the dispersal of the Jews, asks, "Who is a hero?" and answers, "He who controls his passions."

Some settler leaders see in the Palestinians the modern-day incarnation of the Amalekites, a mysterious Canaanite tribe that the Bible calls Israel's eternal enemy. In the Book of Exodus, the Amalekites attacked the Children of Israel on their journey to the land of Israel. For this sin, God damned the Amalekites, commanding the Jews to wage a holy war to exterminate them. This is perhaps the most widely ignored command in the Bible. The rabbis who shaped Judaism could barely bring themselves to endorse the death penalty for murder, much less endorse genocide, and they ruled that the Amalekites no longer existed. But Moshe Feiglin, the Likud activist, told me, "The Arabs engage in typical Amalek behavior. I can't prove this genetically, but this is the behavior of Amalek." When I asked Benzi Lieberman, the chairman of the council of settlements—the umbrella group of all settlements in the West Bank and Gaza—if he thought the Amalekites existed today, he said, "The Palestinians are Amalek!" Lieberman went on, "We will destroy them. We won't kill them all. But we will destroy their ability to think as a nation. We will destroy Palestinian nationalism."

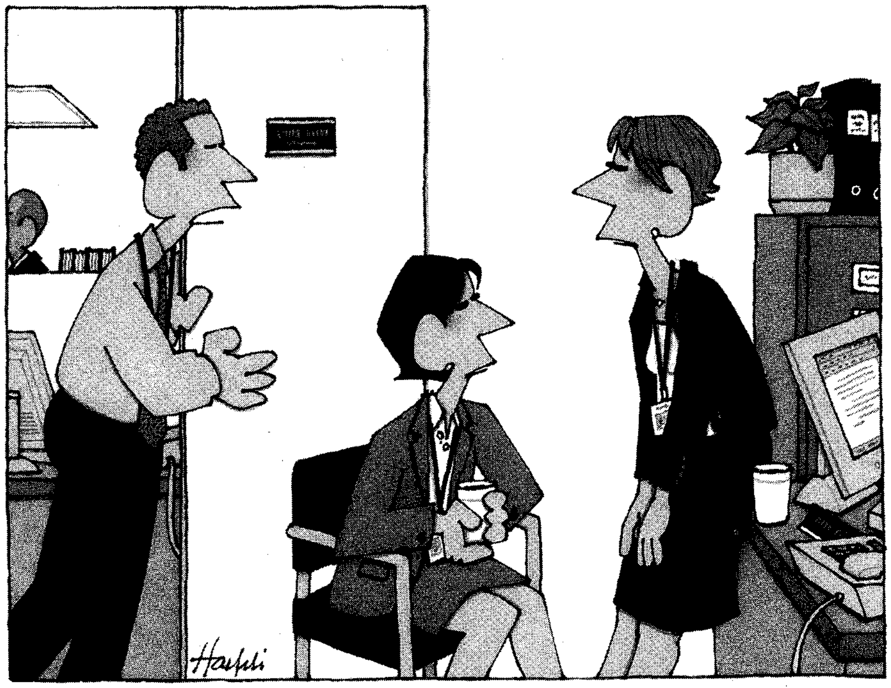
I heard similar talk from Effie Eitam,

a hard-edged former general who leads the National Religious Party, a coalition partner in Sharon's government. Eitam, who is Sharon's housing minister, said, "I don't call these people animals. These are creatures who came out of the depths of darkness. It is not by chance that the State of Israel got the mission to pave the way for the rest of the world, to militarily get rid of these dark forces." Eitam told me that he believes there are innocent men among the Palestinians, but that they are collectively guilty. "We will have to kill them all," he said. "I know it's not very diplomatic. I don't mean all the Palestinians, but the ones with evil in their heads. Not only blood on their hands but evil in their heads. They are contaminating the hearts and minds of the next generation of Palestinians."

THE UNDERGROUND

In a speech delivered last December, Avi Dichter, the chief of the Shabak, warned that an Israeli withdrawal from Biblically important lands could heighten the desire of some Jewish extremists to destroy the Dome of the Rock. (The Muslim mosque and shrine that cover the site now are in the way of the imagined Third Temple.) "Jewish terrorism is liable to create a substantial threat, and to turn the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians into a confrontation between thirteen million Jews and one billion Muslims across the world," Dichter said.

There is precedent for this fear. In the nineteen-eighties, the Shabak uncovered what came to be known as the Jewish Underground. The agency arrested twenty-seven men who had planted bombs in the cars of Arab mayors on the West Bank (two mayors were seriously injured), and had been planning to destroy the Dome of the Rock. A veteran of the terrorist underground, Haggai Segal—he planted the bomb that blew off the legs of the mayor of Ramallah, in 1980—told me that although he does not believe Jewish terrorists will once again plot to destroy the Dome, terrorism will result if Sharon pursues his plan to dismantle settlements. "It's going to be very bad, certainly," he said. "Obviously, we're going to have violence."



"When you're through playing Earth Mother, you've got a call on Line 2."

Kfar Tappuach, a settlement near Yitzhar which is populated by followers of Meir Kahane, is home to an organization called the Jewish Legion. Its stated goals include training dogs to guard settlements in case of an Israeli Army pullout. One of its activists, Lenny Goldberg, who is originally from Queens, told me, "We've got to do this for ourselves. It's the new thing. The Israeli government doesn't want to help us, fine, so we're going to do our own self-defense. We're ready. We're ready to build a true Jewish state up here in the mountains. You remember when the Kingdom of Judaea split from the Kingdom of Israel?" he asked, referring to an event that occurred three thousand years ago. "It's like that. We're ready to go our own way. We're like Judaea, man."

I asked if it was realistic to expect that several thousand settlers could hold off millions of Arabs, as well as the Israeli Army. "Realism? Forget realism," he said. "We're the nation that dwells alone. We can take care of our own Jewish state." Besides, he said, the dogs were very well trained.

The director of the dog-training program is a Kahanist with dirty-blond hair who calls himself Yekutiel Ben-Ya'acov. When he lived in New York, he ran the local branch of Kach, the Kahanist political party, and was known as Mike Guzofsky. Guzofsky arranged for me to be driven from Jerusalem to Kfar Tappuach in order to see a dog-training session. A young British Jew who gave his name as Eliyahu picked me up at a mall at the edge of Jerusalem. On the side of the car was written, in Hebrew, "The Jewish Legion." The car was not armored, and I asked him if it was wise to drive a car labelled "Jewish Legion" through Arab villages. "It's been O.K. so far," he said. As we left, he recited a special prayer for travellers.

Then he drove fast. Traffic was backed up as we approached Tappuach Junction. Soldiers were stopping vehicles with green Palestinian license plates, while cars with yellow Israeli license plates were allowed to drive through. The Arab passengers waited unhappily by the side of the road. "Look at this," Eliyahu said. "It's humiliating. We should kick them out of here for their own good. What they have to go through, it's too much."

Kfar Tappuach is a squalid place of

rusted cars, yards filled with tires and rotting mattresses, and children wearing secondhand clothing. It is populated by an esoteric assortment of marginal Jews—Jewish Defense League veterans from Brooklyn, Russian pensioners, poor Yemenite farmers, Lubavitcher Hasidim, and a group of recent Peruvian converts to Judaism. The Peruvian men are in charge of perimeter security.

Guzofsky walked me through the kennel, at the northern end of the settlement. A sign in English identified the facility as the "Reuben Mattus Memorial Jewish Legion Kennel." Reuben Mattus was the founder of the Häagen-Dazs ice-cream company and reportedly a supporter of Meir Kahane. A trainer named Gershon, a Russian immigrant who came to Israel from Odessa in 1990, was leading a class of dog handlers and their charges. A young Jewish Legion volunteer who gave his name as Rachmiel wore protective padding and played the role of an Arab infiltrator. A sallow man in dusty sandals named Ezra was having difficulty keeping his German shepherd, named Tarzan, in check; Tarzan had sunk his teeth into Rachmiel's arm and wouldn't let go. Ezra began to smack the dog. "Give him a fucking treat, Ezra!" Gershon, the trainer, yelled. Ezra, who is American, did not understand the Hebrew word for "treat."

"Fuck, Ezra, a treat! A treat!" Ezra eventually understood, and waved a biscuit in front of Tarzan, who then released Rachmiel.

"We don't want the dogs to kill the Arabs, just immobilize them," Guzofsky said. He said that the dogs could smell the difference between an Arab infiltrator and a Jewish resident. "The adrenaline of the Arabs, they can detect it. The Arabs are very scared of dogs. Muslims think they're unclean."

The Jewish Legion hopes to begin training other species to help guard settlements. Geese, Guzofsky said, will serve as early-warning indicators. He also claims to have received rabbinical permission to train pigs as guard animals; the group recently purchased its first one. The pigs are useful for two reasons, he said: they have an acute sense of smell, and Muslims consider them a pariah animal. When I noted that Jews do, too, he replied, "We're not going to eat them. We're going to train them."

The session came to an end, and five of us jumped in a pickup truck to drive to Tel Aviv. I sat in the back, next to Ezra, who carried an M-16 with two clips, though he is not in the Army. The conversation turned to the far right's struggle against Ariel Sharon's plan to withdraw settlements from Gaza.

"He should die," Ezra said. "They should slaughter the fat pig."

Guzofsky, in the front seat, said, quickly, "It's not going to be one of us who kills him. It'll be someone you never heard of. I'm telling you, he's in trouble. He's in danger. But it won't be us."

When Dror Etkes looks at the West Bank, he sees not the footprints of ancient Jewish kings and prophets but land grabs and bypass roads, as well as an infrastructure of suppression built by the Army to protect the settlers. I spent several days driving around the West Bank with Etkes, who heads the Settlement Watch program of Peace Now, a left-wing Israeli group that rose to prominence in 1982 when it led protests against Sharon's invasion of Lebanon. He was counting mobile homes and water towers, trying to track the constantly expanding settlement outposts.

On our way to Beit El and Ofra one day, we stopped at an outpost called Migron, the largest of the illegal settlements in the West Bank. Migron, which is near the site where King Saul is thought to have battled the Philistines, is home to forty-three families, who live in mobile homes, awaiting the construction of permanent houses. We drove through the front gate. One of the settlers recognized Etkes immediately, and greeted him warmly. "Dror, how's it going?"

I asked the settler about his friendliness toward an avowed enemy of his movement. "Dror? He's a great guy," the settler said. "What am I going to do? Call him a criminal?"

"He wants to shut you down," I said. The settler laughed. "Next year, we'll have permanent buildings. We'll invite him to see."

Etkes said that the settler's confidence wasn't misplaced. "The settlers have the power, and we react," he said. "The thing I hate about the settlers is their arrogance. They call themselves a kingdom of priests, but it's really a welfare state. Who paves the road to Migron? Who supplies soldiers to protect Migron? Who puts in the water and electricity?"

The story is always the same, Etkes said. "First, the settlers in the area need an antenna for cell-phone reception. Then they need a guy to guard the antenna. And then he gets lonely, so he needs a friend. And the friend needs a *mikvah*"—a ritual bath—"and the *mikvah* needs a plumber, and the plumber has five kids, so they need a school."

The Sharon government has been playing a double game, Etkes said: the "illegal" settlement outposts, which Sharon has told President Bush he will dismantle, are actually built with the help of the government, and guarded by its Army. In the past year, according to Etkes, dozens more outposts have gone up than come down.

"These settlements are the harshest challenge to Israeli democracy," Etkes said. "Not just in the cultural sense but in the disrespect for the law." The illegal settlements make his point. "Imagine if I put a shipping container in the middle of Rabin Square, in Tel Aviv, and said, 'This is where I now live.' Impossible. But if I did it on the West Bank, on an Arab's farmland, it would be fine." We drove on to Beit El, and then northeast. Ofra came into view. It was more orderly than other outposts: neat rows of red-roofed chalets strung along a ridge. "It's odd," Etkes said. "A group of Jews volunteering to live inside an electrified fence in houses built in a Teutonic style."

Etkes told me of an incident that happened fifteen years ago, during the first Palestinian intifada, when he was a twenty-year-old paratrooper. As he was walking to the dining hall of an

ALDER

Are you weary, alder tree,
in this, the age of rain?

From your branches
droop clots of lichen

like fairy lungs. All week,
squalls, tattered mists:

alder, who unfolded
before the receding glaciers

first one leaf then another,
won't you teach me

a way to live
on this damp ambiguous earth?

The rain showers
release from you a broken tune

but when the sun blinks, as it must,
how you'll sparkle—

like a fountain in a wood
of untold fountains.

—*Kathleen Jamie*

Army base in the West Bank, he came across a group of Palestinian prisoners, sitting in the open sun. They were blindfolded, their hands were tied, and they were shoeless. Etkes, who had just returned from an operation in Jenin, saw a small group of "jobnikim," the Army slang for rear-unit soldiers, on their knees in front of the prisoners. They were burning the soles of the prisoners' feet with lighters.

"I ran up to them—I couldn't believe it—I said, 'What are you doing?' " Etkes recalled. "They didn't try to hide it. It was the middle of the day. They were torturing them for fun. I kicked their hands away. It was an instinctive reaction. They stopped."

Later that day, three of the soldiers approached Etkes. "They got me in a corner. They said, 'You shouldn't ever do that. Forget that you shouted at us—but in front of an Arab?' "

The soldiers were Sephardim, the descendants of Jews from Arab countries. Etkes has a fair complexion; his grandfather was a Jew from Germany. "I triggered some kind of reaction in them—'Never do that in front of an Arab.' They hated me because I was an Ashkenazi. They were going to show how tough they could be on Arabs, to make sure the Ashkenazi élite doesn't think that they are Arabs themselves. This is the tragedy of the occupation."

Etkes grew up in a religiously observant home in Jerusalem. He was a member of the religious youth movement, and he dreamed, like many Jewish boys, of fighting and dying—the dying, he said, was the meaningful part—for his people. But his time in the Army upset his assumptions.

"Zionism is my life," he told me. "I'm alive because of Zionism. If my grandfather hadn't come here from Germany in 1936—" He paused. "It's not Zionism that I'm talking about. It's the racist, colonialist elements in Zionism." Etkes's revulsion at the chauvinism of the settlers helped drive him from religion; today, he wears no *kipa*, and says that he does not believe in God.

Etkes, like many leftists in Israel, was ambivalent about Sharon's Gaza plan. He sees it as a partial step, designed to avoid, rather than confront, the hardest issues facing Israel. On the other hand, he said, any pullout is a positive step. "The historical dynamic is against Sharon. This is why the settlers are panicking a little. Sharon has accepted a rationale for removing settlements. He won't remove other settlements in the West Bank, but the settlers think that one of his successors might."

Etkes advocates the removal of settlements from the whole of Gaza and the West Bank, including settlements that straddle the Green Line. This position has never been popular in Israel, even during the Oslo peace process. It is less popular now. Only a minority of Israelis believe that the creation of a Palestinian state from the West Bank and Gaza would bring about an end to the conflict.

I had thought that Etkes was one of the believers, but he asked, "Will a one-hundred-per-cent pullout lead to a peaceful Israel and a peaceful Palestine? Now, I'd have to say no. It wouldn't be the end of the conflict. It might begin a long-term historical process of reconciliation, but this doesn't mean that there wouldn't be a war. There's no way I could say that."

THE SHEIKH

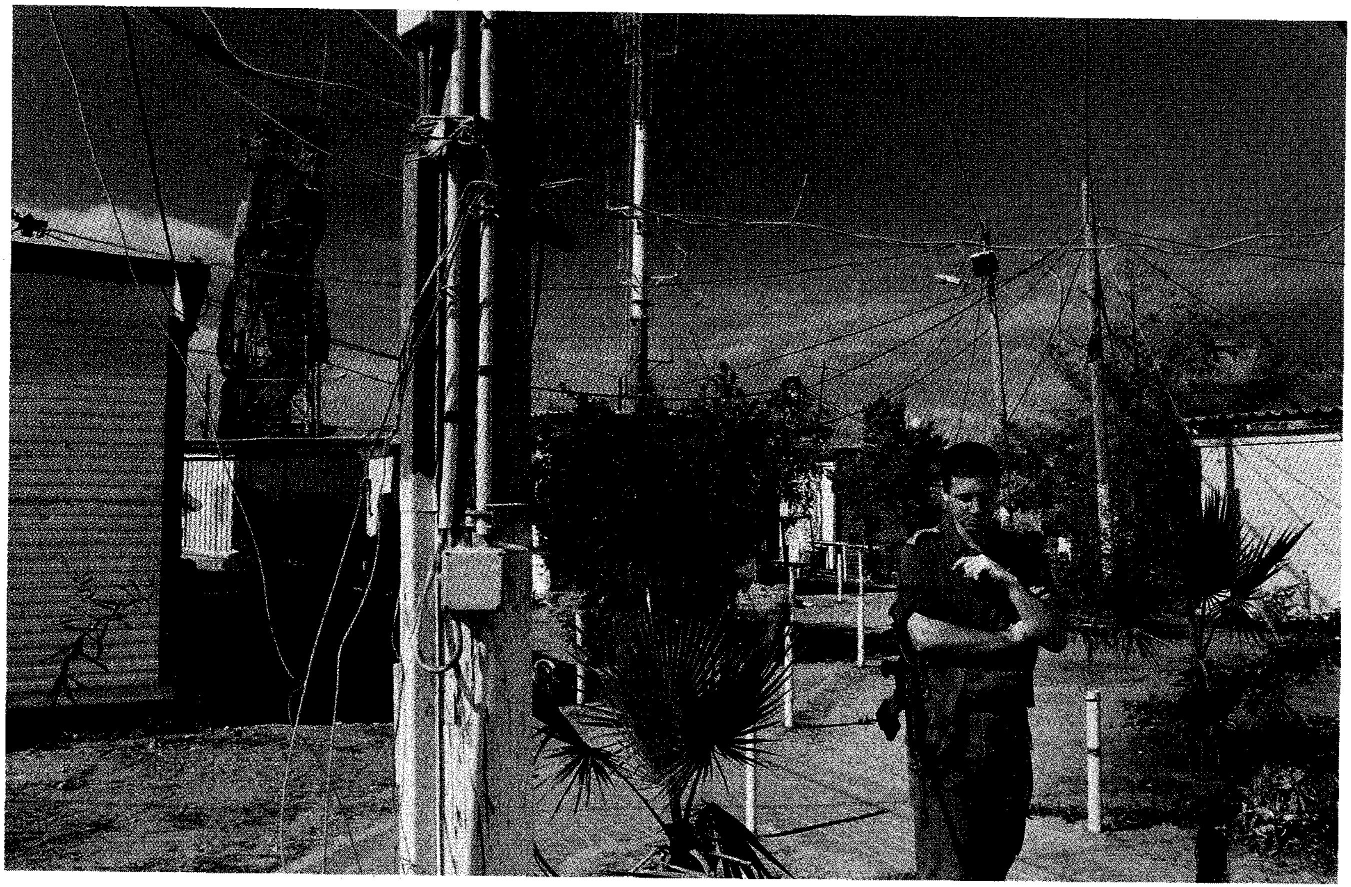
In January, I went to Gaza City to see Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, a founder of Hamas. Four months earlier, Yassin had been the target of an Israeli assassination attempt. A wall near the house where I met him, in the Sabra neighborhood, featured a green-and-red painting of an Israeli bus severed in two.

The Sheikh was seated in a wheelchair at the far end of a reception room. (He had been paralyzed as a young man in a gymnastics accident.) A translator sat close to him, because the Sheikh was nearly deaf. A few days before this meeting, a female bomber named Reem Salah al-Rayashi had blown herself up at the Erez checkpoint, in north Gaza, killing four Israelis. To the Israeli guards at Erez, where Palestinians are searched and cleared before entering Israel to work, Rayashi appeared to be a frail woman with a limp. When the bomb she carried, which was attached to her waist, set off a metal detector, she told the Israeli commander of the checkpoint that it was the fault of a plate in her leg. The Israeli, a twenty-eight-year-old named Gal Shapira, believed her, and ordered that she be searched by female soldiers. As Rayashi was being led into a side room by soldiers, she detonated the bomb, killing Shapira and the other soldiers, and injuring four Palestinians. The attack was the first conducted by a female member of Hamas, a religiously conservative group that had previously limited participation in terror attacks to men. Rayashi was the mother of a three-year-old and a one-year-old. In a video made shortly before the attack, she stated, "God gave me the ability to be a mother of two children who I love so. But my wish to meet God in paradise is greater, so I decided to be a martyr for the sake of my people. I am convinced God will help and take care of my children."

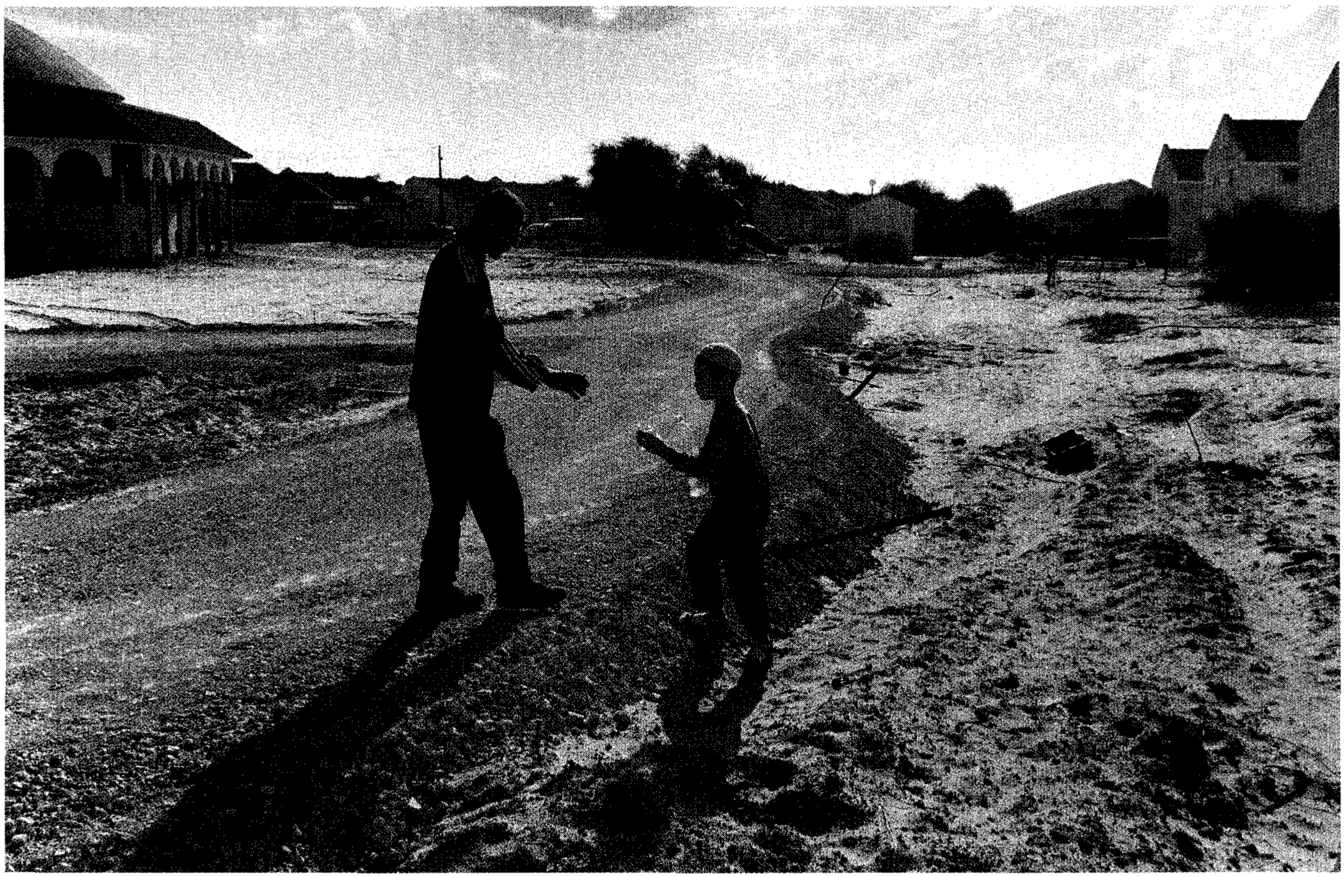
I asked Yassin what Islamic sources justified the use of women in acts of murder-suicide. "The jihad against Israel is the duty of every individual Muslim," he said. "The military wing of Hamas did not use women in these operations until the need arose. It would have been difficult for a man to conduct this operation. A woman achieved it more easily. Her children will know that she is a martyr for Palestine. This is a great gift to them. There is no fear of death among the children."

Just outside the Old City walls of Jerusalem is a narrow valley called Gai Hinnom, which means "hell" in Hebrew. On a stone altar in this valley, it is said, the Canaanites sacrificed children to the god Moloch. If the extremists among the Jews suffer from a Moriah complex, then the extremists among the Palestinians are in the grip of a Moloch complex. Jewish children are among the targets of sacrifice, but some extremists sacrifice their own children as well, dispatching them on suicide missions, and using them as shields when they attack Israeli soldiers. In Gaza three years ago, I witnessed Hamas gunmen firing at Israeli jeeps from behind a screen of children throwing rocks. The Israelis, faced with the choice of retreating or returning fire, returned fire. They hit at least two children with rubber-coated steel bullets, injuring them seriously. This shoot-out took place during school hours. Almost five hundred Palestinian children under the age of eighteen have been killed by Israelis since 2000. Not all of them were shot by soldiers who were under fire. Palestinian children, even those throwing stones, are not in themselves threats to armed soldiers in tanks, and many were simply bystanders.

Although many Palestinians mourn these deaths, children are taught in school to venerate juvenile martyrs. The Gaza Strip is papered with posters celebrating dead children. Even the Palestinian terrorist groups that are ostensibly secular—those attached to the Fatah movement of Yasir Arafat—have elevated childhood martyrdom to a sacrament. On Palestinian Authority television two years ago, Arafat was



A soldier in Gaza. Even Israeli commanders believe that the Army has become morally compromised in the occupied territories.



A settler's child and a worker in Gaza. Many settlers believe that any withdrawal would be theological heresy and political suicide.

MAGNUM

asked if he had a message for Palestinian children. He answered, "This child . . . who is grasping the stone, facing the tank; is it not the greatest message to the world when that hero becomes a martyr? We are proud of them."

Hamas's covenant doesn't differentiate between settlers and other Israelis—in fact, it doesn't mention settlers at all. It reads, "Our struggle against the Jews is very great and very serious. . . . It strives to raise the banner of Allah over every inch of Palestine. . . . The Prophet, Allah bless him and grant him salvation, has said, 'The Day of Judgment will not come about until Muslims fight the Jews.' " I asked Yassin whether this was propaganda or policy—whether the enemy was the occupation, or Israel.

"There were some Jews who lived in Palestine before Zionism," Yassin said. "The children of these Jews will be allowed to stay under the protection of Islam. But the rest of the Jews must be defeated, or they must leave."

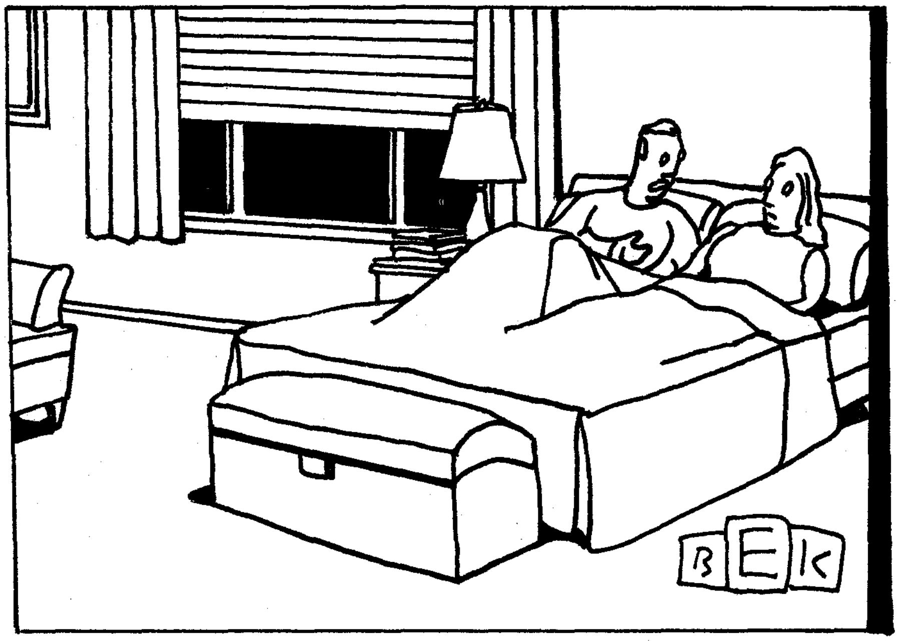
Two months after our conversation, Yassin was assassinated in an Israeli missile strike. Abdel Aziz Rantisi was appointed the new leader of Hamas in Gaza. In January, I had met with Rantisi, who was a pediatrician; I asked how he could justify harming Israeli children. He told me that Israel has forced Hamas to commit these acts. Then he said, "The Jews are worse than Hitler. I believe the Nazis did not break the bones of children with rockets. I believe Hitler wouldn't bulldoze homes on civilians when they were screaming inside. It's impossible to say that Hitler would do that. I believe that more than fifty per cent of the world doesn't believe in the Holocaust, and I am one of them. The Israelis practice terror against our people and say to the world that we are terrorists. I believe that they did the same thing to Hitler. The Germans were the victims of the Jews."

We were in his apartment, in Gaza City, which was filled with his grandchildren when I arrived. They provided him with protection. Rantisi never picked up a ringing telephone; he always had one of the children answer. (The Israeli security services have managed to kill at least one prominent terrorist with an exploding telephone.) At the end of the interview, a telephone rang on a table next to my chair. No children were available to answer it, and Rantisi asked me to pick up the receiver. I declined.

Rantisi was assassinated last month, also in a missile strike. I reviewed my notes of conversations I had had with him in the nineteen-nineties, and I came across a discussion about suffering. I had suggested that the underlying story of the Middle East might be the collision between right and right: in other words, there was justice to both the Jewish cause and the Palestinian cause. Rantisi became impatient and scornful. "Jewish suffering is nothing," he said. "People who make others suffer cannot suffer themselves. It's impossible. The Jews are the enemy of God, and God is the enemy of the Jews."

THE GENERAL

On the night of April 16, 1988, Israeli commandos landed silently on a beach in Tunis. Agents of the Israeli intelligence service, the Mossad, were waiting for them. The Israelis drove to an apartment building that was the



"How would you feel about incorporating sex into our sex life?"

• •

home of Khalil al-Wazir, the second-ranking official, after Yasir Arafat, in the Palestine Liberation Organization. Israel believed that al-Wazir, who was better known as Abu Jihad—the Father of Holy War—was coördinating, from Tunis, the first Palestinian intifada, which had begun four months earlier.

The commandos found Abu Jihad in his apartment and shot him to death. As they turned to leave, Abu Jihad's daughter surprised them. One of the commandos told her, in Arabic, to go to her mother. Then they left, and were at sea in a matter of minutes.

In Israeli security circles, it is believed that the man who led the assassination team up the stairs into Abu Jihad's apartment was Moshe Ya'alon, who is now a lieutenant general and the chief of staff of the Israeli Army. He is also the overseer of the assassins who killed Yassin and Rantisi.

Ya'alon, who was born in 1950, has a mild, bookish, and unimposing manner, possessing little of the brashness one associates with Israeli generals such as Moshe Dayan or even Ehud Barak. In the course of several interviews, in his office at Army headquarters in Tel Aviv, and on West Bank Army bases, Ya'alon, who is known by his nickname, Boogie, talked about his war on terror. I asked him if he thought it had been a mistake to assassinate Abu Jihad, who, unlike Arafat, had a reputation for realism.

"I don't know," he answered. He paused, and added, "It was a mistake not to kill Arafat."

He believes this fervently; he is convinced that Arafat, like the leaders of Hamas, is unwilling to grant any legitimacy to the idea of Israel. The heart of the conflict, Ya'alon said, is this: it is not Jewish settlements that Palestinian leaders find objectionable but Jews. He doesn't regret the assassinations of the Hamas leadership. These were all men with Jewish blood on their hands, he said.

Before Ya'alon Hebraized his name, he was Moshe Smolansky. His parents raised him in a town in northern Israel that was a bastion of the Labor Party. His father was an immigrant from Ukraine, who came to Palestine in 1925; his mother was a partisan in Poland in the Second World War, and came to Palestine in 1947. Her parents and siblings were killed by the Germans.

Ya'alon was a member of the Working Youth movement. As a young soldier, he served in the Fighting Pioneer Youth Brigade, which established kibbutzim in isolated parts of Israel. By 1970, he was fighting against Arafat's Fatah. "I lost friends in those operations," he said. His life is intertwined with Arafat's. "I dealt with Arafat in Jordan, then in Lebanon, then in Tunis, then here," he said.

After the shock of the 1973 Yom Kippur War, in which Syria and Egypt launched an initially effective surprise attack, Ya'alon decided to return to the military. By the mid-nineteen-nineties, he had become the chief of military intelligence and was marked—unfairly, he said—as a man of the right.

"In August of 1995, I came to the late Mr. Rabin, saying that I do not see that the Palestinian leadership is preparing the Palestinian people for reconciliation," Ya'alon recalled. "I'm talking about education, the rhetoric. I'm talking about not eliminating the terror organizations' capability to attack us. . . . I said that the continuation of the peace process should be conditioned as an ultimatum to Chairman Arafat."

Since 2000, Ya'alon said, "checkpoints are not the reason for terrorism—terrorism is the reason for checkpoints." In the last month of calm before the intifada, "we had just a few checkpoints on the former Green Line. Now, because of the terror, we have had to implement closures and add dozens of checkpoints around the Palestinian cities and along the roads. From Arafat's point of view, this is what he wants. To complicate the situation, to create occupation. To make us be seen as occupiers."

Ya'alon, who is usually blunt, was opaque when he discussed the settlements. His job is ostensibly apolitical (though each of his three most recent predecessors entered politics upon retirement), and he says that the question of settlements should be decided on the political level. But he suggested that the settlements, far from serving a security purpose, were a security burden. Indirectly, he also blamed the settlements—and the military presence their defense requires—for exacerbating the tension between Israelis and Palestinians. He has got into disputes with Dichter, the chief of the Shabak, as well as with his immediate superior, the minister of defense, Shaul Mofaz, about the proper response to suicide bombings. In security staff meetings, Dichter and Mofaz argued that curfews and additional checkpoints should be imposed on the West Bank. Ya'alon disagreed with the tactic, believing that blanket closures bred only bitterness. The bombers should be hunted, but the entire West Bank shouldn't be punished for a suicide bombing, he told me.

"It should be done in a more sensitive way," Ya'alon said. "Not to close and just hit, and close." He disagreed with Mofaz, a Likud member who preceded Ya'alon as chief of staff. "Unfortunately, Mofaz thinks in another way: You should use more force and more force," Ya'alon said. (Lately, however, Mofaz has publicly called for measures to ameliorate the conditions of Palestinians.)

For Ya'alon, the occupation of Gaza and the West Bank—or, in his view, the reoccupation, given that during the period of the Oslo peace process the Palestinians had a great deal of autonomy in their cities—has forced his Army to confront the moral dilemmas inherent in the suppression of a hostile civilian population.

In Israel's first, unsuccessful, attempt on the life of Sheikh Yassin, the Air Force dropped a five-hundred-pound bomb on a building in which Yassin was holding a meeting. Yassin escaped with only minor injuries. Shortly after the attack, Ya'alon told me that he had advised against it. "I wasn't sure we would be able to destroy the house," Ya'alon said. It would most likely have taken a two-thousand-pound bomb to kill Yassin, but a bomb of such power would have also destroyed parts of two adjacent buildings. "I wasn't ready to harm innocent people," he said. But, he added, "I'm not sure that our decision about Sheikh Yassin was a moral decision. It might have been immoral to our own people not to kill him."

Two days after the assassination of Sheikh Yassin, I spoke with Ya'alon again. He seemed satisfied. "You should judge this operation in moral terms. In moral terms, he deserved it," he said. "It's up to them whether they're up for death. They can stop terrorist attacks. If they stop the terror attacks, we don't do anything."

In 2002, the Army had targeted another Hamas leader in Gaza, Salah Shehadeh. "Shehadeh was responsible for the murders of dozens of Israelis, and we tried to intercept him several times, and we found that usually he was surrounded by his wife and his children," Ya'alon said. "Now, we knew that he was responsible for devastating attacks, and we avoided killing him because we didn't want to kill innocent people, even his children. At a certain point, after more than six months in which we absorbed casualties, we discussed it, the moral issue—to weigh the lives of innocent Israeli people with the lives of his family."

He continued, "We decided that we wouldn't kill him if the children were in the house, but if his wife would be in the house we'd do it." In the end, fourteen Palestinian civilians were killed along with Shehadeh, including nine children, one of them Shehadeh's. Ya'alon told me that he regrets the children's deaths, but he believes that there may come a time, after a "mega-attack"—the Israeli term for an attack of 9/11 proportions—when he won't have the moral luxury of worrying about the lives of Palestinian children. "At a certain point, the United States decided to drop nuclear bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki," he said.

"Unfortunately, this is my intelligence assessment—that there is no partner for a two-state solution. This is the reason the Palestinian leadership initiated this terror conflict." For now, Ya'alon told me that he sees a "moral asymmetry" between the Arabs and the Jews. "They want to deliberately kill our children," he said. "We don't want to kill theirs."

The Palestinian village of Beit Furik lies southeast of Nablus, adjacent to the radical Jewish settlement of Itamar and due south of the equally zealous settlement of Elon Moreh. Because of Beit Furik's proximity to the two settlements, and the roads leading to them, the movements of Arab residents are strictly controlled. An Army checkpoint just outside the village means that its residents sometimes wait hours to leave, and that sometimes they don't leave at all.

On the morning of February 26, 2002, Samar Hamdoun, a thirty-two-year-old resident of Beit Furik, went into labor. The local doctor was called, and decided that she should be taken immediately to the nearest hospital, in Nablus. Hamdoun and her husband approached the checkpoint by taxi, but the soldiers refused to let them pass.

"My husband said, 'Please, please, she's giving birth,' but the soldier started yelling and waving his hands to go back," Hamdoun said, when I saw her recently in her home, off the village's badly paved main road. She wore a black *hejab*, and was surrounded by relatives when we spoke, in a large but bare living room. Two photographs of Saddam Hussein were on the wall. "My husband said, 'My wife is in trouble,

COMPLAINTS

she's having the baby now, we have to go, we must go.' The soldier could see that I was pregnant. But they wouldn't let us pass."

The Hamdouns spent the next four hours driving a circuitous and bumpy back road to Nablus, which is, via the Army checkpoint, only fifteen minutes away. Halfway through the journey, Hamdoun lost consciousness and began to hemorrhage. When they finally arrived at the hospital in Nablus, four hours later, the baby was dead.

Hamdoun said she blames "the Jews" for the baby's death. Members of her family nodded. Her father-in-law then spoke. "We don't want anything to do with politics," he said. "We just want to be left alone."

What was Saddam Hussein doing on the wall, I asked.

"He stands up for Palestinians," he said. "He fights the Jews."

A month before I visited the Hamdoun family, a resident of Beit Furik had carried out a suicide bombing in Tel Aviv, killing four people. Some of Israel's leaders asked whether the residents of places like Beit Furik would be quite so intent upon killing Jews if the occupation disappeared. Even Defense Minister Mofaz, who takes a hard line against the Palestinians, recognized the dilemma. Ideological opposition to the existence of Israel, even within its pre-1967 boundaries, motivates most terrorism, he told me, but he also said, "I believe that if you put people under closure and you press on them and do not ease their lives . . . it could push them to the terror organizations."

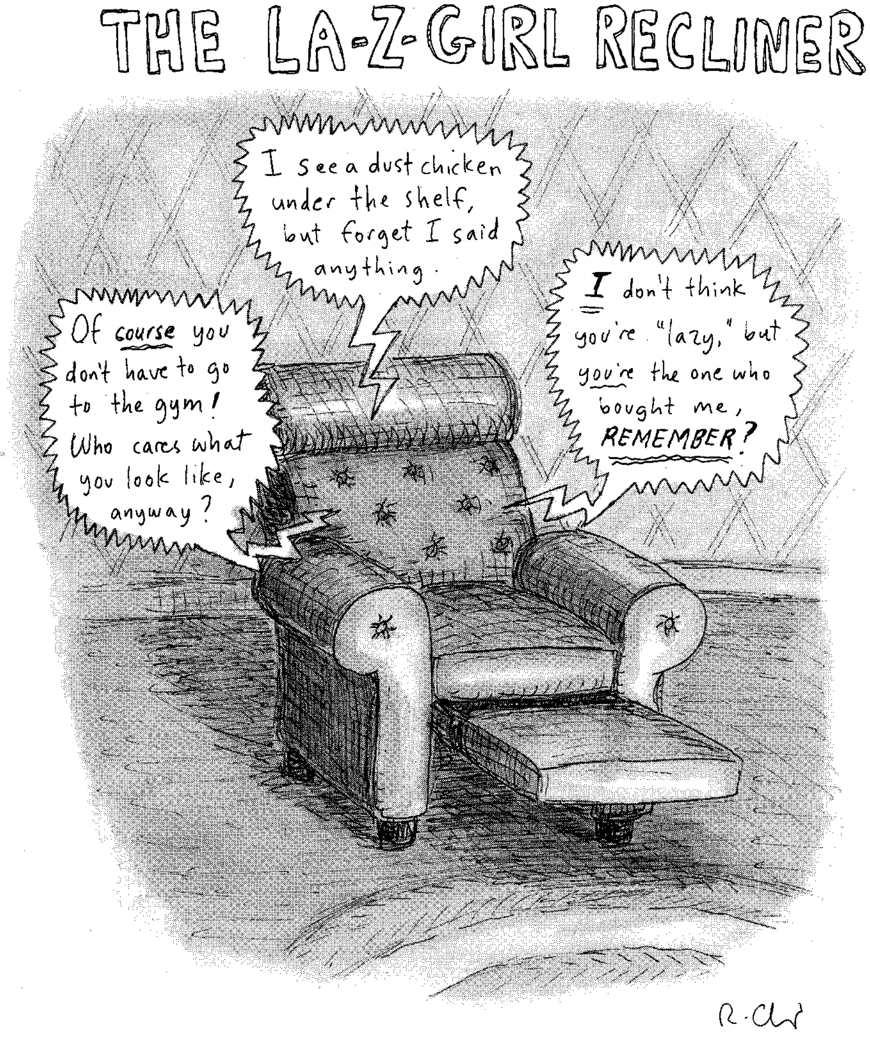
There is no question, even to its commanders, that the Israeli Army has become morally compromised in the West Bank and Gaza. Soldiers have shot unarmed civilians; they have abused Palestinians at checkpoints; and they have killed civilians, including children. There is no such thing as a clean occupation, especially of a population that uses children as weapons, and mosques and hospitals as arms depots and firing positions. But the Israeli Army is under particular stress, because it has inserted itself deep into the occupied territories in order to protect the Jewish settlers who have planted themselves among the Palestinians.

Last winter, in Hebron, I met a soldier named David Feuerstein, who was attached to the Fighting Pioneer Youth Brigade. Feuerstein was nineteen, the son of an Orthodox rabbi in New Jersey who is a prominent supporter of Hebron's Jewish community. Feuerstein was struggling with the confusions of service in Hebron. "We're here to protect the Jews from the Arabs, right?" he said, squeezing his hands together to ward off the cold. "But sometimes these Jewish kids will bother the Arabs, like old men, or girls. They'll harass them. So it's strange. We have to protect the Arabs from the Jews, even though we're here to do the opposite."

General Ya'alon told me that the Army's human-rights problem is not systemic. "We educate the soldiers not to take anything from Palestinians, money or anything else. In most cases, our young soldiers have behaved properly, but unfortunately, in this armed conflict, we have some cases that we're not proud of, and we deal with such cases very strictly. We put soldiers in prison because of misbehavior. This is one of our main challenges for the soldiers and commanders, to keep our moral values."

Critics accuse the Army of only sporadically prosecuting human-rights abusers. Dror Etkes, of Peace Now, sees a more intransigent problem. "This is not an issue of a few rotten apples," he said. "It's the crate itself that is rotten. The Army is operating deeply in the occupied territories because it has to defend the settlers. This part of the conflict is a war to defend the privileges of the settlers, and there is no way for the Army to do this elegantly. It's like the French in Algeria. No one has ever succeeded in doing this without dehumanization."

Ya'alon seemed fatalistic about the burdens placed on his Army, by his enemies and by the country's political leadership. "We are aware that the soldiers have an enormous burden daily—


THE LA-Z-GIRL RECLINER
I see a dust chicken under the shelf, but forget I said anything.
Of course you don't have to go to the gym! Who cares what you look like, anyway?
I don't think you're "lazy," but you're the one who bought me, REMEMBER?

the checking of Palestinians," he said. "I don't like this mission. But what can we do?" The Army, he said, would protect Israelis "either in Galilee or in Judaea and Samaria"—that is, both within and beyond Israel's 1967 borders.

ISRAEL'S FUTURE

The leaders of the Jewish national-religious camp do not adhere to observable reality. They exist in the glorious Jewish past and in the messianic future but not in the reality of today, in which Jewish soldiers give their lives to protect settlements; in which Palestinians live and die at checkpoints; in which Israel is becoming a pariah among the nations; and in which Israel may one day cease to exist as a democratic Jewish state.

There remains a moral gulf between the most zealous settlers and the most extreme of the Palestinian Islamists. Small cells of settlers have shown themselves to be capable of committing atrocious acts of violence, but the main institutions of the settlement movement have not endorsed the sort of violence against Arabs that members of many Palestinian factions commit against Jews.

Still, there are similarities. Like the theologians of Hamas, the ideologues of the settlement movement have stripped their religion of all love but self-love; they have placed themselves at the center of God's drama on earth; and they interpret their holy scriptures to prove that their enemies are supernaturally evil and undeserving of even small mercies. And, like Hamas, which would build for the Palestinians a death-obsessed Islamic theocracy, the settlers, if they have their way, would build an apartheid state ruled by councils of revanchist rabbis.

Gershom Scholem, the scholar of Jewish mysticism, once warned of the great eschatological temptation posed by a born-again Jewish nation. Can Jewish history manage to reënter concrete reality, Scholem asked, without being destroyed by the messianic claim that reëntry is bound to bring up from its depths? The messianism of the settlers, like the messianism of Hamas, is the triumph of expediency: people who believe that God has given them a mission have granted themselves license to commit terrible sins.

Elyakim Haetzni, an early settler of Kiryat Arba, and an inflammatory apocalyptist, told me that when the Jews of Tel Aviv—the cultural capital of Israel, a place poisoned by the dissolute culture of the West—try to force their hill-country cousins out of the settlements, blood will be spilled.

"The situation of Hanukkah is with us," Haetzni said. Hanukkah, it should be remembered, commemorates not only the Jewish defeat of Israel's Greek overlords but the defeat of Hellenized Jews by the Maccabees. "Now the clash is very, very near," Haetzni said. "The battle is about Jewish identity. The battle is about Judaism." For now, the settlers are outnumbered, by secular Israelis as well as by religious Jews—and there are many—who venerate life more than land. But the majority has not yet found a way to bend the minority to its will.

The most farsighted among the Palestinians now understand that settlements are good for their cause. Michael Tarazi, a Palestinian-American and Harvard-trained legal adviser to the Palestinian negotiating team, told me, "Settlements are the vanguard of binationalism"—a single state that would soon have an Arab majority. "I don't care if they build more," Tarazi said. "The longer they stay out there, the more Israel will appear to the world to be essentially an apartheid state."

He went on, "The settlements mean that the egg is hopelessly scrambled. Basically, it is already one state. There are no signs saying 'Welcome to Occupied Territory.' It's one country, the same electricity grid, the same aquifers. Except that the three million Christians and Muslims in Gaza and the West Bank don't have the same rights as the five million Jews in Israel, and the Arabs in Israel are second-class citizens compared with the Jews. Now the cause is justice and equality."

By justice and equality, he meant the dissolution of Israel as a haven for Jews. "This is something very fundamental," he said. "Zionism in practice is about taking the land and getting rid of the people."

Zionism, I argued, is, in essence, the liberation movement of an oppressed people. The settlers have tried to turn it into a fundamentalist theology, but Zionism, at its core, remains a liberal idea.

"Stop scapegoating the settlers!" he said. "I think you're in denial, I really do. It's very typical. You want to find a reason why all this is happening, but you don't look at the practice of Zionism itself. . . . It's true that the national-religious Zionists are dragging Israel in the direction of theocratic fascism, but the settlement enterprise is encouraged by the government. These people are just extreme strains. They say publicly what people think privately."

Tarazi believes that the Palestinian strategy should change. "We have to look at the way the South Africans did it. The world is increasingly intolerant of the Zionist idea. We have to capture the imagination of the world. We have to make this an argument about apartheid."

Israel is faced with two options: keep the settlements, and risk either apartheid or binationalism; or separate cleanly from the Palestinians, by withdrawing settlements and raising a wall between the two sides. In 2002, Israel began to build such a barrier. Its planned route veers deep into the West Bank, in order to encircle settlements. Some Israelis argue against a fence that tracks the Green Line for practical reasons: Israel might very well have to hold high ground, on the east side of the Line. Another argument, made by Dennis Ross, who served as President Clinton's Middle East negotiator, is that a Green Line fence would reward the Palestinians for avoiding their responsibility to put an end to terror. "The message has to be 'We know you don't like where the fence is, but if you don't fulfill your security responsibilities this is where it is. It won't be permanently there unless you make it permanent,' " Ross told me. Ross may have a point, but it is one that will be lost if a fence designed to keep bomb-carrying murderers out of Israeli cities is turned, instead, into a tool for a settlers' landgrab.

The argument against unilateral withdrawal is straightforward. The Palestinians will not be satisfied with the West Bank and Gaza, and will simply demand more. Even many leftists have come to this conclusion. In Jerusalem, I spoke to Ya'acov Rotblit, an icon of the peace movement—he wrote its anthem, "A Song for Peace." He told me that he now thought that the movement had been motivated by "wishful thinking."

I asked him how far to the right he had moved. "I didn't move anywhere," he said. "I was kicked. Listen, the whole world of assumptions, of beliefs, of hopes, of thoughts about possibilities collapsed totally with this intifada." I then asked if he was sure that the Palestinians were interested only in Israel's destruction, and not simply in a better offer than Barak had been capable of making at Camp David. "We give and they take and they take more," he said. "The whole Temple Mount wouldn't have been enough."

He believed that the settlers had been misunderstood. "If these people behaved the way the world says they behaved, they would have done ethnic cleansing against the Arabs already," he said. "They are very patient people. They don't shoot back as much as anyone else in the same situation would." The settlers, he has come to believe, are not the problem. "The first day the first Jew came back here, that's the start of the problem. I was never pro-settlement," he added. "But why *shouldn't* a Jew live in Hebron?"

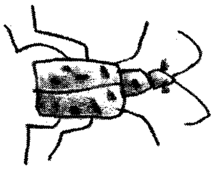
Many Israelis fear that the Palestinians would consider a unilateral Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza as a sign of weakness. When Israel withdrew its forces from southern Lebanon, four years ago, Hezbollah, Israel's foremost Lebanese foe, declared victory, and argued that the continual killing of Israelis by Palestinians would eventually destroy the Zionist spirit. But much depends on the manner of withdrawal. "There is a right way to do it, without giving them the impression that we cower before terrorism," Defense Minister Mofaz told me. There is also the possibility of going so far as to exacerbate the situation.

Ariel Sharon, after proposing what, for him, was a revolutionary idea—the pullout of settlers from Gaza—now seems bogged down, trapped between the Palestinians and the settlers. He is making moves against both. In mid-May, Sharon launched his soldiers and bulldozers in two directions. In Rafah, in the southern Gaza Strip, the Army began intensive operations that were designed, it said, to shut down weapons-smuggling tunnels between Gaza and Egypt. Dozens of Palestinians were killed, and a large number of Palestinian homes along the border were destroyed. Last week, there were more fatalities in Rafah, after the Army fired on a demonstration; at least four children were killed. And, in the northern West Bank, soldiers, with considerably more politesse, attempted to dismantle the Yitzhar Lookout.

These two operations have one thing in common: neither will solve the problem that was meant to be addressed. Sharon's actions against the Palestinians will not stop terrorism, and his actions against outposts will not stop the settlement expansion. Both operations symbolize the Sharon government's impotence, and its inability to grapple with the great issues before it.

There are Israelis who, unlike Sharon, believe that a withdrawal from Gaza and most of the West Bank could dilute the Palestinians' urge to make war. "I believe that reality is stronger than everything," Amnon Lipkin-Shahak, a former chief of staff, told me. "When they have a state and when they won't have the everyday reality of going through an Israeli checkpoint, they'll have something to lose." I asked him if he believes Palestinians would still dream of a greater Palestine, and he responded that "it is O.K. to dream." He went on, "Israelis will still dream of a greater Israel."

The Jewish settlement of Tekoa, on the edge of the Judaean desert, northeast of Hebron, is built near the site of the ancient Jewish village of the same name. The ancient Tekoa is best known as the birthplace of a shepherd and fig gatherer named Amos, the Jewish prophet. Tekoa was then part of the southern Kingdom of Judah, the rival to the northern Kingdom of Israel. Amos first heard the voice of God in Tekoa. The prophet left his sycamore trees and his sheep and carried God's message to the northern kingdom—a place, the Bible says, of avarice and decadence and empty ritual.



When Amos arrived, he condemned the sins of foreigners but told the Israelites that God's greatest anger was reserved for them, His own people. He said that they had "sold the righteous for silver, and the poor for a pair of shoes." Amos did not believe that the Jews were worse than their neighbors, but that being chosen by God brought with it a burden: the burden of moral stringency. Ritual worship would not please God, Amos said, when the poor went hungry. "I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not be appeased by your solemn assemblies," he told the Israelites. Amos wrote in fire, "Let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream."

Today, two hundred and fifty Jewish families, half of them Orthodox, most of modest means, live in Tekoa. It is average in size and appearance for a West Bank settlement. Among its residents is a friend of mine named Seth Mandell, an Orthodox rabbi, and his wife, Sherri, who brought their children to Israel seven years ago, from Maryland. One morning earlier this year, I met Seth at his house, on a vine-covered lane. It was a clear, cold day, and we went for a walk into a steep ravine outside the gates of the settlement. We followed a narrow path to a cave. Three years ago, Seth's son Koby and a friend skipped school for the day and came to the wadi. They were fourteen years old. Their bodies were found the next day in the cave; they had been beaten to death with rocks. No one has been caught in connection with the killings. I had visited the cave before with Seth, so we didn't speak much. The cave is low-ceilinged, dank, and dark. The remnants of memorial candles, hundreds of them, covered the wet stone.

On the way back to Seth's house, we talked about Amos, who seemed to me to embody a different message from that of the men who conceived of the settlement project. Amos was a universalist, I said. His concerns were not those of conquering land but those of spreading justice.

Seth corrected me. He recognized the

universality of Amos' message, but he also remembered his audience. "We can reinterpret Amos into universal meaning, but Amos, just like Jesus, was talking to Jews," he said.

But wasn't Amos demanding universal moral behavior?

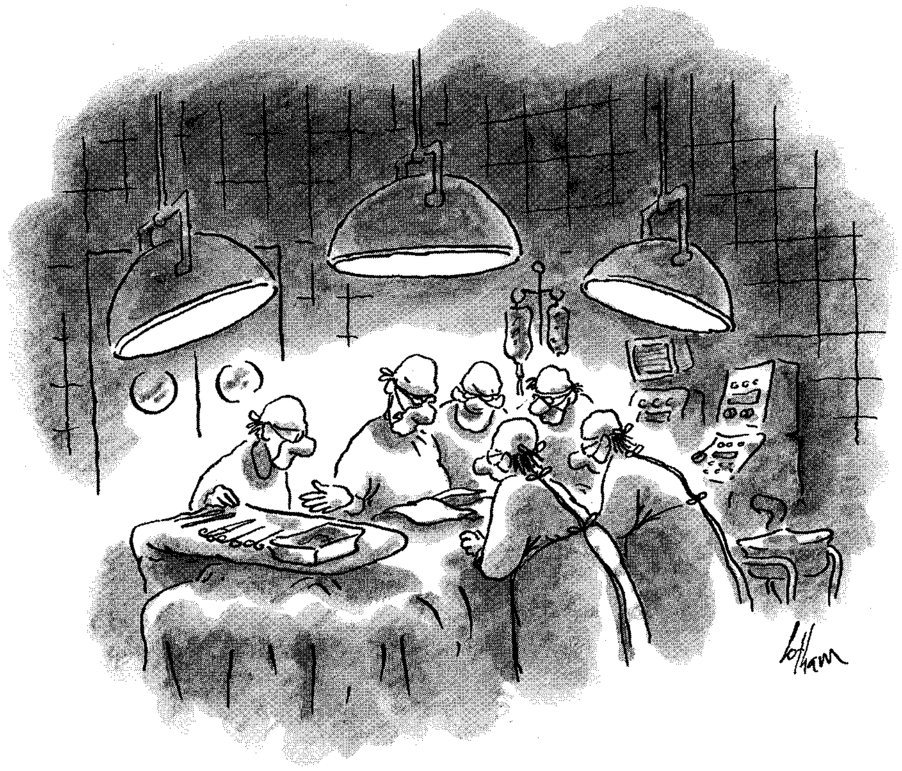
"Of course," Seth replied, "but he was also telling Jews that the reward for righteousness was the land we're on. The universalists don't see the Zionism in Amos, and the hard-right Zionists don't see the universalism."

I asked him how he kept his faith. He said, "The world is full of pain. But without God it's only pain. I can't imagine a world without God."

The rabbi of Tekoa is a man named Menachem Froman. He was once a paratrooper; now he is a teacher of the Kabbalah. Froman has formed his own peace camp, in a manner of speaking. He believes that the West Bank should become Palestine, and he has no intention of leaving once it does. He will stay in Tekoa, he said, and may become a citizen of Palestine, under the leadership of Yasir Arafat. Froman has met Arafat, and refers to him as a friend. His meetings with Arafat have caused many of Tekoa's residents to call him a fool. Seth Mandell, who is a man of moderation, does not consider Froman his rabbi.

"I'm the village idiot," Froman said, happily. "I'm the primitive rabbi, the primitive Jew. But I'm a realist. I accept reality. I'm not talking about utopia. I accept what I see. There is a Tekoa, and there is a Tuqua"—the Arab village next door. "I don't want to change reality, I want to work with reality. And the reality is that there is a Jewish village and an Arab village. Here you have men who are attached to the land, and there you have men who are attached to the land."

He went on, "If one of my children says, 'This is my father,' does it mean that I have only one child? Not necessarily. I'm the father of more than one child." God, too, has more than one child, as does the land between the river and the sea, he said. "The Jews have a right to live in freedom, the Arabs have a right to live in freedom. I have my pride, they have their pride. I have independence, they should have independence. I don't want to suffer, they don't want to suffer."



"Let's just start cutting and see what happens."

• •

Froman is a graduate of Mercaz HaRav, the Kookist yeshiva in Jerusalem, so it was a shock to hear him talking about a two-state solution.

"I remember my father—he was from Poland—we would go out in the city, in Haifa, and he would say, 'Look, Menachem, Jews on the street, Jews on the bus, Jews everywhere! They didn't succeed!' " By "they" he meant the Germans. "I remember the first time Chaim Weizmann"—the first President of Israel—"came to Haifa, my father, he shouted, 'Long live the President of Israel!'

"You know," he continued, "the Palestinians need this as well."

I asked him how he could stay in Tekoa if it became part of Palestine.

"We'll have a shtetl in the desert," he said.

Froman invests too much faith in Yasir Arafat, and he is most likely wrong to believe that Israeli Jews would live, en masse, in a Palestinian state. And Froman is naïve to believe that the Palestinians would accept them. Still, his idealism is bracing. Other graduates of the Mercaz HaRav Yeshiva, the rabbis who serve as the theologians of the settlement movement, have blinded themselves to the presence of Arabs in the land. Froman is a reminder that Orthodox Judaism is not merely a Judaism of rock and stone, and that land is not as holy as life.

Sixty years ago, for many Jews, land *was* life, and Palestine meant salvation. The revisionist Zionist leader Vladimir Jabotinsky, the spiritual father of the Likud, was blunt about the need for Jews to retake their ancient homeland. In 1937, speaking to the British Parliament, he said, referring to the Arabs in Palestine, "I fully understand that any minority would prefer to be a majority. It is quite understandable that the Arabs of Palestine would also prefer Palestine to be Arab state No. 4, No. 5, or No. 6—that I quite understand. But when the Arab claim is confronted with our Jewish demand to be saved, it is like the claims of appetite versus the claims of starvation."

Today, the Jews have a national home, a potent Air Force to protect it, and the patronage of the most powerful country on earth. Today, the Jewish claim to the West Bank and Gaza is one of appetite, not of starvation. ♦

FICTION

THE SECRET GOLDFISH

BY DAVID MEANS

He had a weird growth along his dorsal fin, and that gape-mouth grimace you see in older fish. Way too big for his tank, too, having outgrown the standard goldfish age limit. Which is what? About one month? He was six years old—outlandishly old for a fish. One afternoon, Teddy, as he was called then, now just Ted, took notice of the condition of Fish's tank: a wedge of sunlight plunged through the window of his bedroom and struck the water's surface, disappearing. The water was so clotted it had become a solid mass, a putty within which Fish was presumably swimming, or dead. Most likely dead. Where's Fish? Where's Fish? Teddy yelled to his mom. She came into his room, caught sight of the tank, and gave a small yelp. Once again, a fish had been neglected.

Everyone knows the story. The kids beg and plead: Please, please get us a fish (or a dog), we'll feed it, we will, honest, we'll take care of it and you won't have to do a single thing. We'll clean the tank walls with the brush and make sure the filter charcoal is replaced regularly and refill the water when it evaporates. Please, please, we can handle it, we're old enough now, we are, it'll be so much fun, it will, so much fun. But in the end they don't. They dump too much food in no matter how often they're told to be careful, to use just a pinch, and even after they've read Biblical-sounding fables about the fish who ate too much and grew too large for its bowl, shattering the sides, they watch gleefully while he consumes like mad, unable to stop. It's fun to watch him eat, to witness the physical manifestation of a fact: the level of Fish's hunger is permanently set to high. In the metaphysics of the fish universe, gluttony is not a sin. The delicate wafers of food fall lightly onto the water, linger on the surface tension, and are broken apart on infinitely eager lips. She overfeeds, too (on the days when she's pretty sure the kids haven't fed him). Her shaking mechanics are sloppy. The light flakes become moist, collude, collect their inertia, and all too often fall out of the can in a large clump. Really, she hasn't neglected the poor fish. "Neglect" seems a word too heavy with submerged intent. Something was bound to slip to the side amid the chaos of the domestic arena. But Fish has sustained himself in terrible conditions. He is the king of all goldfish survivors.

ZOHAR LAZAR

Her own childhood goldfish—named Fred—ended his days in Grayling Pond, a hole near her house in northern Michigan, dug out by the state D.N.R. on a pond-production grant. (Why the Great Lakes state needed more ponds is anyone's guess.) Garnished with a wide band of lily pads, the water a pale yellow, speckled with skeeter-bug ripples, the pond was close to becoming a marsh. Hope you survive, Fred, her father had said as he slopped the fish out of the pail and into the pond. She did not forget the sight of her beloved fish as he slipped from the lip of the bucket and rode the glassine tube of water into the pond. The rest of the summer she imagined his orange form—brilliantly bright and fluorescent against the glimmer of water—in a kind of slow-motion replay. Dumbest animals on earth, she remembered her father adding. Nothing dumber than a carp. Except maybe a catfish, or your goddam mother.

Not long after that afternoon at Grayling Pond, her father left the house in a fit of rage. Gone for good, her mother said. Thank Christ. Then, a few months later, he was killed in a freak accident, crushed between hunks of ice and the hull of a container ship in Duluth. Superior's slush ice was temperamental that winter, chewing up the coastline, damaging bulkheads. Her father had signed on as one of the men who went down with poles and gave furtive pokes and prods, in the tradition of those Michigan rivermen who had once dislodged logjams with their peaveys and pike poles, standing atop the timber in their spiked boots, sparring with magnificent forces. Accounts varied, but the basic story was that the ice shifted, some kind of crevasse formed, and he slipped in. Then the lake gave a heave and his legs were crushed, clamped in the jaw of God's stupid justice. As she liked to imagine it, he had just enough time to piece together a little prayer asking for forgiveness for being a failure of a father ("Dear Heavenly Father, forgive me for my huge failings as a father to my dear daughter and even more for my gaping failure as a husband to my wife") and for dumping Fred ("and for getting rid of that fish my daughter loved more than me"), and then to watch as the pale winter sun slipped quickly away while the other men urged him to remain calm and told him that he'd be fine and they'd have him out in a minute or so, while knowing for certain that they wouldn't.

Long after her father was gone, she imagined Fred lurking in the lower reaches of Grayling Pond, in the coolest pockets, trying to conserve his energy. Sometimes, when she was cleaning upstairs and dusting Teddy's room, she would pause in the deep, warm, silent heart of a suburban afternoon and watch Fish as he dangled asleep, wide-eyed, unmoving, just fluffing his fins softly on occasion. One time she even tried it herself, standing still, suspended in the dense fluid of an unending array of demanding tasks—cleaning, cooking, washing, grocery shopping, snack-getting—while outside the birds chirped and the traffic hissed past on the parkway.

The marriage had fallen apart abruptly. Her husband—who worked in the city as a corporate banker and left the house each morning at dawn with the *Times*, still wrapped in its bright-blue delivery bag, tucked beneath his arm—had betrayed his vows. One evening, he'd arrived home from work with what seemed to be a new face: his teeth were abnormally white. He'd had them bleached in the city. (In retrospect, she saw that his bright teeth were the first hint of his infidelity.) He had found a dentist on Park Avenue. Soon he was coming home late on some nights and not at all on others, under the vague pretense of work obligations. In Japan, he explained, people sleep overnight in town as a sign of their dedication to business; they rent cubicles just wide enough for a body, like coffins, he said, and for days when he did not return she thought of those small compartments and she chose to believe him. (Of course I know about the Japanese, she had said, emphatically.) Then one night she found him in the bathroom with a bar of soap, rubbing it gently against his wedding ring. It's too tight, he said. I'm just trying to loosen it. When others were perplexed by the fact that she had not deduced his infidelity, picked up on the clues, during those fall months, she felt compelled (though she never did) to de-

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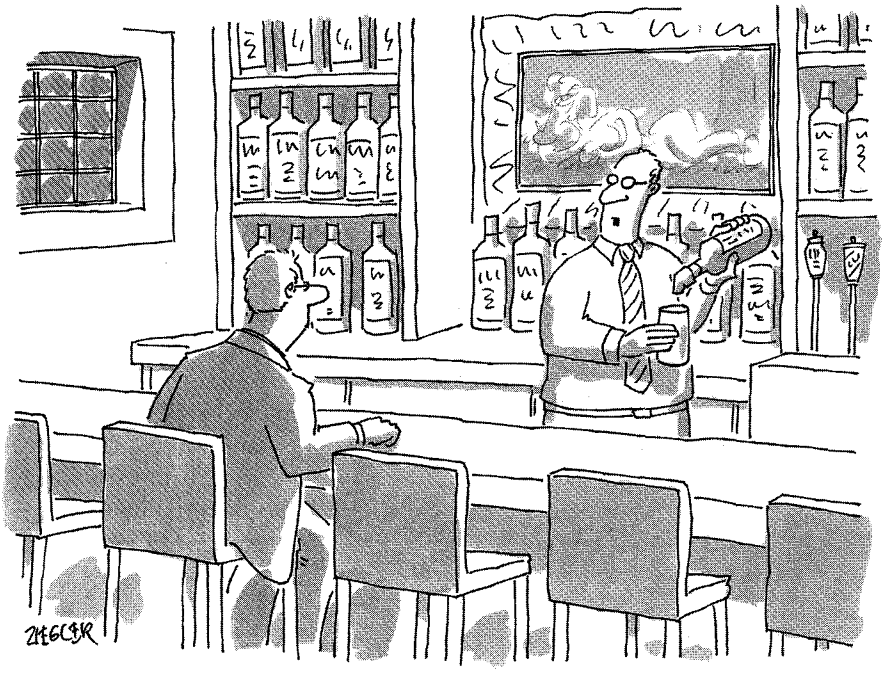
scribe the marriage in all of its long complexity—fifteen years—starting with the honeymoon in Spain: the parador in Chinchón, outside Madrid, that had once been a monastery, standing naked with him at the balcony door in the dusky night air listening to the sounds of the village and the splash of the pool. She had given up her career for the relationship, for the family. She had given up plenty in order to stay home for Teddy's and Annie's formative years, to make sure those brain synapses formed correctly, to be assured that the right connections were fused. (Because studies had made it clear that a kid's success depends on the first few years. It was important to develop the fine motor skills, to have the appropriate hand play, not to mention critical reasoning skills, before the age of four!) So, yes, she guessed the whole decision to give herself over to the domestic job had been an act of free will, but now it felt as though the act itself had been carried out in the conditions of betrayal that would eventually unfold before her.

Fish had come into the family fold in a plastic Baggie of water, bulging dangerously, knotted at the top, with a mate, Sammy, who would end up a floater two days later. Pet Universe had given free goldfish to all the kids on a preschool field trip. In less than a year, Fish had grown too big for his starter bowl and begun to tighten his spiralled laps, restricted in his movements by his gathering bulk and the glass walls of the bowl. Then he graduated to a classic five-gallon bowl, where, in the course of the next few years, he grew, until one afternoon, still deep in what seemed to be a stable domestic situation, with the kids off at school, she went out to Pet Universe and found a large tank and some water-prep drops and a filter unit, one that sat on the rim and produced a sleek, fountainlike curl of water, and some turquoise gravel and a small figurine to keep the fish company: a cartoonish pirate galleon—a combination of Mark Twain riverboat and man-of-war—with an exaggerated bow and an orange plastic paddle wheel that spun around in the tank's currents until it gobbed up and stuck. The figurine, which was meant to please the eyes of children, had that confused mix of design that put commercial viability ahead of the truth. Teddy and Annie hated it. Ultimately, the figure served one purpose. It rearranged the conceptual space of the tank and gave the illusion that Fish now had something to do, something to work around, during his languorous afternoon laps, and she found herself going in to watch him, giving deep philosophical consideration to his actions: Did Fish remember that he had passed that way before? Was he aware of his eternal hell, caught in the tank's glass grip? Or did he feel wondrously free, swimming—for all he knew—in Lake Superior, an abundant, wide field of water, with some glass obstructions here and there? Was he basically free of wants, needs, and everything else? Did he wonder at the food miraculously appearing atop the surface tension, food to be approached with parted lips?

One evening, after observing Fish, when she was at the sink looking out the window at the yard, she saw her husband there, along the south side, holding his phone to his ear and lifting his free hand up and down from his waist in a slight flapping gesture that she knew indicated that he was emotionally agitated.

Shortly after that, the tank began to murk up. Through the dim months of January and February, the filter clotted, the flow stopped, and stringy green silk grew on the lip of the waterfall. The murk thickened. In the center of the darkness, Fish swam in random patterns and became a sad, hopeless entity curled into his plight. He was no longer fooled by his short-term memory into thinking that he was eternally free. Nor was he bored by the repetitive nature of his laps, going around the stupid ship figurine, sinking down into the gravel, picking—typical bottom-feeder—for scraps. Instead, he was lost in the eternal roar of an isotropic universe, flinging himself wildly within the expanding big bang of tank murk. On occasion, he found his way to the light and rubbed his eye against the glass, peering out in a judgmental way. But no one was there to see him. No one seemed available to witness these outward glances. Until the day when Teddy, now just Ted, noticed and said, Mom, Mom, the tank, and she went and cleaned it, but only after she had knocked her knuckle a few times on the glass and seen that he was alive, consumed in the dark but moving and



"Do you have a Frequent Drinkers card?"

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seemingly healthy. Then she felt awe at the fact that life was sustainable even under the most abhorrent conditions. She felt a fleeting connection between this awe and the possibility that God exists. But then she reminded herself that it was only Fish. Just frickin' Fish, she thought. Here I am so weepy and sad, trying to make sense of my horrible situation, that something like this will give me hope. Of course, she was probably also thinking back to that afternoon, watching her father sluice Fred down into the warm waters of the shallow pond in Michigan. Her memory of it was profoundly clear. The vision of the fish itself—pristine and orange—travelling through the water as it spilled from the bucket was exact and perfect.

She set to work scooping out the water with an old Tupperware bowl, replacing it in increments so the chlorine would evaporate, driving to Pet Universe to get another cotton filter, some water-clarifying drops, and a pound sack of activated charcoal nuggets. She disassembled the pump mechanism—a small magnet attached to a ring of plastic that hovered, embraced by a larger magnet. Somehow the larger magnet coöperated with the magnet on the plastic device and used physical laws of some sort to suck the water up and through the filter, where it cascaded over the wide lip and twisted as it approached the surface. It seemed to her as her fingers cleaned the device that it was not only a thing of great simplicity and beauty but also something much deeper, a tool meant to sustain Fish's life and, in turn, his place in the family. The afternoon was clear, blue-skied, wintry bright—and out the kitchen window she saw the uncut lawn, dark straw brown, matted down in van Gogh swirls, frosted with cold. Past the lawn, the woods, through which she could see the cars moving on the parkway, stood stark and brittle in the direct implications of the winter light. It was a fine scene, embarrassingly suburban, but certainly fine. Back upstairs, she saw Fish swimming jauntily in his new conditions and she was pretty sure that he was delighted, moving with swift strokes from one end of the tank to the other, skirting the figurine professionally, wagging his back fin—what was that called? was it the caudal fin?—fashionably, like a cabaret dancer working her fan. A beautiful tail, unfurling in a windswept motion in the clearing water. When she leaned down for a closer look, it became apparent that the fin was much, much larger than it seemed when it was in action and twining in on itself. When Fish paused, it

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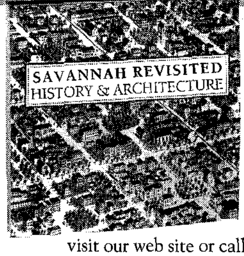

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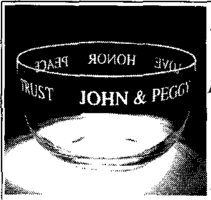

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swayed open beautifully—a fine, healthy, wide carp tail. Along his sides, he had the usual scars of an abused fish, a wound or two, a missing scale, a new, smaller growth of some kind down near his anal fin. But otherwise he seemed big, brutally healthy, still blinking off the shock of the sudden glare.

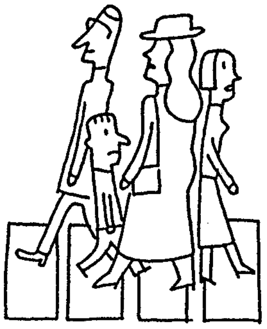
Then the tank fell back into its murk, got worse, stank up, and became, well, completely, utterly, fantastically murky. Here one might note tangentially: if, as Aristotle claims, poetry is something of graver import than history—partly because of the naturalness of its statements—then Fish was more important than any domestic history, because Fish was poetic, in that he had succumbed to the darkness that had formed around him, and yet he was unwilling to die—or, rather, he *did not* die. He kept himself alive. He kept at it. Somehow he gathered enough oxygen from the water—perhaps by staying directly under the trickle that made its way over the lip of the filter. Of course, by nature he was a bottom-feeder, a mudfish, accustomed to slime and algae and to an environment that, for other fish, would be insufferable. No trout could sustain itself in these conditions. Not even close. A good brookie would've gone belly up long ago. A brookie would want cool pockets of a fast-moving stream, sweet riffles, bubbling swirls, to live a good life. But Fish stood in his cave of slime, graver than the history of the household into which his glass enclave had been placed: Dad packing his suitcases, folding and refolding his trousers and taking his ties off the electric tie rack and carefully folding them inside sheets of tissue, and then taking his shoes and putting each pair, highly glossed oxfords (he was one of the few to make regular use of the shoeshine stand at Grand Central), into cotton drawstring sacks, and then emptying his top dresser drawer, taking his cufflinks, his old wallets, and a few other items. All of this stuff, the history of the house, the legal papers signed and sealed and the attendant separation agreement and, of course, the divorce that left her the house—all this historical material was transpiring outside the gist of Fish. He could chart his course and touch each corner of the tank and still not know shit. But he understood something. That much was clear. The world is a mucky mess. It gets clotted up, submerged in its own gunk. End of story.

He brushed softly against the beard of algae that hung from the filter device, worked his way over to the figurine, leaned his flank against her side, and felt the shift of temperature as night fell—Teddy liked to sleep with the window cracked a bit—and the oxygen content increased slightly as the water cooled. During the day, the sun cranked through the window, the tank grew warm, and he didn't move at all, unless someone came into the room and knocked on the tank or the floor, and then he jerked forward slightly before quickly settling down. A few times the downstairs door slammed hard enough to jolt him awake. Or there was a smashing sound from the kitchen. Or voices. "What in the world should we do?" "I would most certainly like this to be amicable, for the sake of the kids." Or a shoe striking the wall in the adjacent master bedroom. At times he felt a kinship with the figurine, as if another carp were there alongside him, waiting, hovering. Other times he felt a slight kinship with the sides of the tank, which touched his gill flaps when he went in search of light. God, if only he knew that he, Fish, was at the very center of the domestic arena, holding court with his own desire to live. He might have died happily right there! But he was not a symbolic fish. He seemed to have no desire to stand as the tragic hero in this drama.

Sent out, told to stay out, the kids were playing together down in the yard so that, inside, the two central figures, Dad and Mom, might have one final talk. The kids were standing by the playhouse—which itself was falling to decrepitude, dark-gray smears of mildew growing on its fake logs—pretending to be a mom and a dad themselves, although they were a bit too old and self-conscious for playacting. Perhaps they were old enough to know that they were faking it on two levels, regressing to a secondary level of playacting they'd pretty much rejected but playing Mom and Dad anyway, Teddy saying, I'm gonna call my lawyer if you don't settle with me, and Annie responding, in her high sweet voice, I knew you'd lawyer up on me, I just knew it, and then both kids giggling in that secretive, all-knowing way they have. Overhead, the tree branches were fuzzed with the first buds of spring, but it was still a bit cold, and words hovered in vapor from their mouths and darkness was falling fast over the trees, and beyond the trees the commuter traffic hissed unnoticed.

If you were heading south on the Merritt Parkway on the afternoon of April 3rd, and you happened to look to your right through the trees after Exit 35, you might've seen them, back beyond the old stone piles, the farm fences that no longer held significance except maybe as a reminder of the Robert Frost poem about good fences and good neighbors and all of that: two kids leaning against an old playhouse while the house behind them appeared cozy, warm, and, clearly, expensive. A fleeting tableau without much meaning to the commuting folk aside from the formulaic economics of the matter: near the parkway = reduced value, but an expensive area + buffer of stone walls + old trees + trendiness of area = more value.

There is something romantic and heartening about seeing those homes through the trees from the vantage of the parkway—those safe, confided Connecticut lives. Inside the house, the secret goldfish is going about his deeply moving predicament, holding his life close to the gills, subdued by the dark but unwilling to relinquish his cellular activities, the Krebs cycle still spinning its carbohydrate breakdown. The secret goldfish draws close to the center of the cosmos. In the black hole of familial carelessness, he awaits the graceful moment when the mother, spurred on by Teddy, will give yet another soft shriek. She'll lean close to the glass and put her eye there to search for Fish. Fish will be there, of course, hiding in the core of the murk near the figurine, playing possum, so that she will, when she sees him, feel the pitiful sinking in her gut—remembering the preschool field trip to Pet Universe—and a sorrow so deep it will send her to her knees to weep. She'll think of the sad little pet funeral she hoped to perform when Fish died (when Fish's sidekick died, Dad flushed him away): a small but deeply meaningful moment in the back yard, with the trowel, digging a shoebox-size hole, putting the fish in, performing a small rite ("Dear Lord, dear Heavenly Father, dear Fish God, God of Fish, in Fish's name we gather here to put our dear fish to rest"), and then placing atop the burial mound a big rock painted with the word "FISH." It would be a moment designed to teach the children the ways of loss, and the soft intricacies of seeing something that was once alive now dead, and to clarify that sharp defining difference, to smooth it over a bit, so that they will remember the moment and know, later, recalling it, that she was a good mother, the kind who would hold pet funerals.



But Fish is alive. His big old carp gills clutch and lick every tiny trace of oxygen from the froth of depravity in the inexplicably determinate manner that only animals have. He will have nothing to do with this household. And later that evening, once Dad is gone, they'll hold a small party to celebrate his resurrection, because they had assumed—as was natural in these circumstances—that he was dead, or near enough death to be called dead, having near-death visions, as the dead are wont: that small pinpoint of light at the end of the tunnel and visions of an existence as a fish in some other ethery world, a better world for a fish, with fresh clear water bursting with oxygen and other carp large and small in communal bliss and just enough muck and mud for good pickings. After the celebration, before bedtime, they'll cover the top of the clean tank in plastic wrap and, working together, moving slowly with the unison of pallbearers, being careful not to slosh the water, carry it down the stairs to the family room, where with a soft patter of congratulatory applause they'll present Fish with a new home, right next to the television set. ♦

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THE CRITICS

A CRITIC AT LARGE

LOVE SUPREME

Gay nuptials and the making of modern marriage.

BY ADAM HASLETT

In December of 1990, Genora Dancel and Ninia Baehr, a lesbian couple from Honolulu, applied for and were denied a license to marry. They decided to file suit against the state for discrimination. The local branch of the A.C.L.U. declined to represent them, and the national gay legal organizations initially kept their distance, considering the issue premature. But the couple persisted, and three years later the Hawaii Supreme Court became the first in the nation to support the right of same-sex couples to wed. Conservative religious groups poured money into the state and eventually helped pass an amendment to its constitution declaring marriage an exclusively heterosexual institution.

More was at stake than the laws of Hawaii. Article IV of the United States Constitution establishes that "Full Faith and Credit shall be given in each State to the public Acts, Records, and judicial Proceedings of every other State." This is the reason that a couple married in New York can fly to California and still legally be husband and wife when they land. Worried that other states might one day extend marriage rights to same-sex couples, conservatives in Congress introduced the Defense of Marriage Act, which defined marriage as between a man and a woman for the purposes of all federal law, from taxes to Social Security, and released the states from any constitutional obligation to recognize same-sex marriages that might be performed elsewhere. President Clinton, seeking to deny Bob Dole a wedge issue in his 1996 reëlection campaign, signed the bill late on a Friday night, after the press corps had gone home.

The issue's sudden prominence during the past several months stems from a decision of the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts last November to grant same-sex couples full civil marriage. For the first time in this country's history, a state has sanctioned the marriage of two men or two women; because the Massachusetts constitution can't be amended any sooner than 2006—the process is under way but by no means certain to succeed—it will do so for at least the next two years. The Bay State thus joins the Netherlands, Belgium, and three Canadian provinces in offering gay couples not only the rights and obligations of marriage but the word itself.

The ensuing national ferment has become a struggle over the meaning and purpose of matrimony. For marriage as we know it today is the product of a particular history—a history that explains both its public character and the private expectations we have for it. The advent of same-sex marriage brings into focus a much larger transformation in how we have come to imagine the institution.

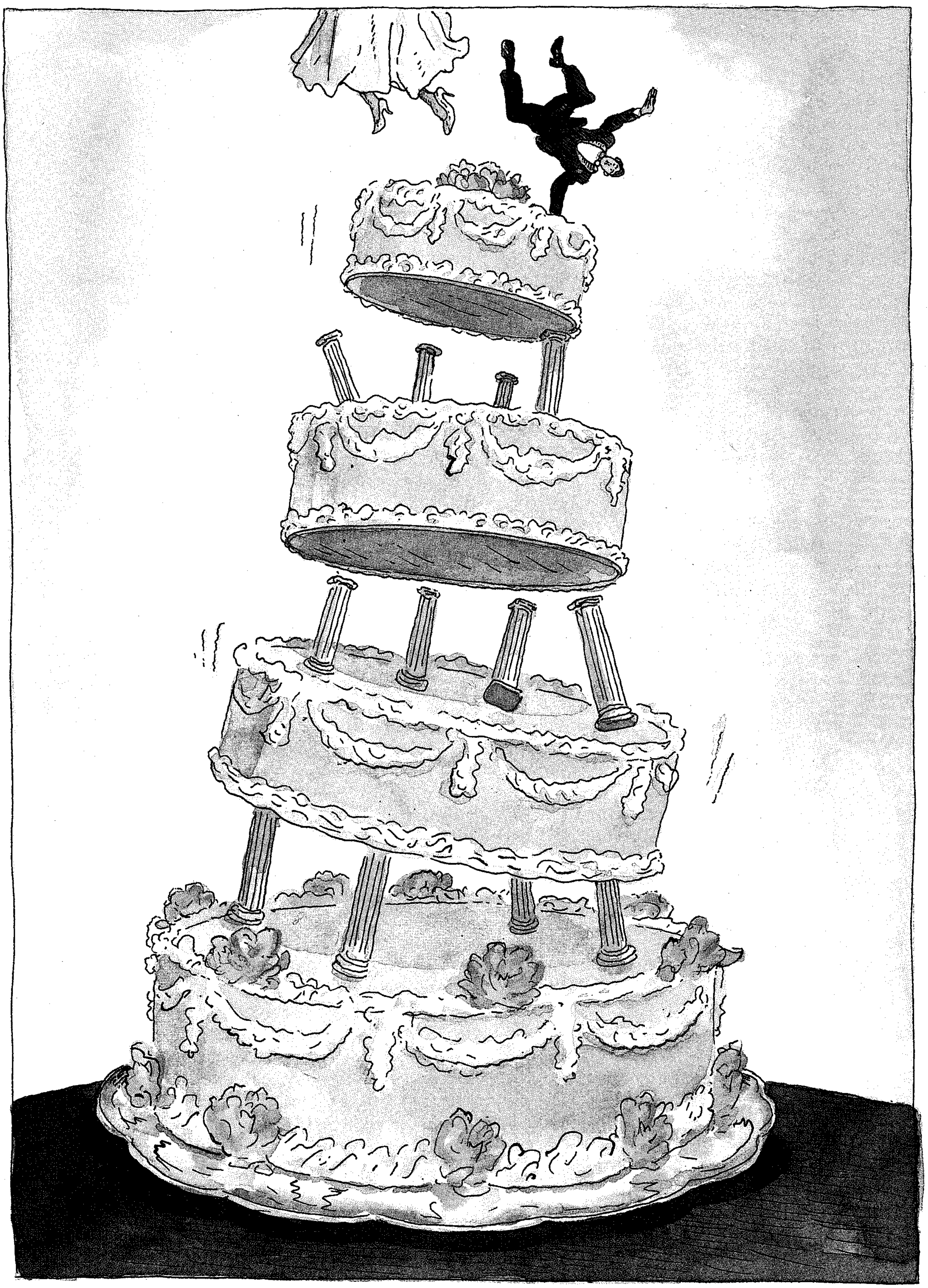
For centuries in Europe, formal marriage was a private contract between landed families, designed to insure that property remained within a particular lineage. In the upper classes, families essentially married other families, forging political alliances and social obligations among relatives and kin. It was during the Reformation, with the emergence of the early Protestant idea of "companionate marriage," that the emotional bond between husband and wife came to be seen as an end in itself. As the social historian Lawrence Stone noted, this was a marked departure from the Catholic ideal of chastity, which considered earthly marriage a more or less unfortunate necessity meant to accommodate human weakness; "It is better to marry than to burn," St. Paul had said, but he made it sound like a close call. So when the Puritans wrote of husbands and wives as mutually respectful and affectionate partners they were moving toward a new understanding of marriage as a kind of spiritual friendship.

It was Milton who took this concept to its logical conclusion. Having married a woman with whom he soon discovered he had nothing in common, he became a staunch advocate of divorce. When the "meet and happy conversation" that is "the chiefest and the noblest end of marriage" ceases, he argued, no authority should have the power to force a man and a woman to remain wed. It was hundreds of years before the law caught up with his notion that irreconcilable differences might be grounds for divorce. But what his tracts on the subject demonstrate is that early Protestant thinking about matrimony contained the seeds of our own more radical individualism.

These days, few would disagree that respect and affection are central to a successful marriage. But most of us would add another ingredient, which had long been viewed skeptically as a reason to wed: romantic love. Burton, in his "Anatomy of Melancholy"—the most widely read book of the seventeenth century after the Bible—reflected a common view when he described marriage as one of several "remedies of love," which was itself an illness to be overcome. Not until the confessional diaries and novels of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries started to influence bourgeois notions of what Jane Austen called "connubial felicity" did romance begin its steady ascent in the marital realm. Today, needless to say, the most respectable reason you can give for getting married is that you have fallen in love. We have managed to create an ideal of matrimony that combines both lifetime companionship and the less stable but more intoxicating pleasures of romantic ardor.

Such great expectations of marital

BARRY BLITT



What we think of as "traditional" marriage, centered on romantic love and companionship, is a development of recent vintage.

happiness belong to a larger history of the Western emphasis on the self. The philosopher Charles Taylor, in an examination of how our attitude toward interior life has changed over the past five hundred years, argues that the trend line runs in one direction: from a self-understanding gained from our place in larger entities—such as a chain of being or divine order—toward purpose discovered from within, through what we consider to be authentic self-expression. This is the distance Western culture has travelled from the church confessional to the therapist's couch. In turn, the choice of whom to marry has become less about satisfying the demands of family and community than about satisfying oneself. When you add the contraceptive and reproductive technologies that have separated sex from procreation, what you have is a model of heterosexual marriage that is grounded in and almost entirely sustained on individual preference. This is a historically peculiar state of affairs, one that would be alien to our ancestors and to most traditional cultures today. And it makes the push for gay marriage inevitable.

WASTREL

Dear spit, the week is turning over
with the world. All is angry shouting outdoors.
I feel like one of St. Ursula's virgins
taking a last look at shelving rock and tree,
sailing into what must be the ineffable
if indeed it means anything to itself.

Tomorrow the stone judge will be here,
then more and more pioneers,
covering the basin as far as one can see
into blue beginnings. They have their place
in the populations, but are nominally
no more than we, planted here to survey them
and moving backward with sips of the tide.

We knew the tower bridge was jury-rigged,
the spirit spoof a trickle in the eye of God
we behold from a questioning though necessary
distance. In summer it was straw hats and licorice,
which, fading, leave a taste for other novelties
and sundries. It is never too late for stealth,
mourning itself, or the other irregular phantoms.

—*John Ashbery*

If agreement between two people were all that was required, of course, gays and lesbians would have been marrying for some time already. According to the 2000 census, the first to collect such data, there are five hundred and ninety-four thousand same-sex couples living in the United States (and that's no doubt an undercount, given people's reluctance to report their sexual orientation to the government). But marriage requires the consent of a third party—namely, the state.

This fact, too, can be traced to the same early Protestants who gave us companionate marriage. As the journalist E. J. Graff tells us, in her newly reissued popular history "What Is Marriage For?" (Beacon; $16), at the time Luther nailed his proclamations to the door, Rome had no requirement that a priest be present at the wedding ceremony; vows spoken in private were sufficient to create a binding marriage. That caused the aristocracy no end of trouble, given that disobedient children were liable to threaten carefully negotiated contracts by running into the closet with a servant and whispering sweet promises. For the northern European Protestants, the solution was to require, for the first time, a public ceremony with the presence of witnesses. They also transferred the power to enforce the new rules to the emerging secular states. In England, precaution had long taken the form of "banns": a couple's intention to wed was proclaimed in church on three successive Sundays, thus giving a community plenty of time to determine whether either party was committed elsewhere. The state-issued marriage licenses we employ today originated in magistrates' offices and enabled well-to-do families to avoid the banns by attesting to the fitness of the parties in a document.

Informal arrangements nevertheless persisted among those who were less well off, or who lived in less regulated societies. In the early days of the American Republic, with a population scattered across the continent, there were simply too few ministers and justices of the peace to go around. Largely for the practical reason of not wanting to declare so many children bastards, most state courts recognized common-law marriage, established by mutual consent and cohabitation. If you said you were married and the neighbors tended to believe you, then in the eyes of the law you were. (In eleven states, including Texas, this is still the case.) In the decades after the Civil War, however, government bureaucracy, spurred by the moralists and social scientists of the Progressive movement, began to regulate marriage far more aggressively. For the first time, people who sought to wed had to submit to medical examinations, and those with syphilis or gonorrhea were prevented from marrying by criminal statute. By the century's end, state legislatures had all but mandated that couples obtain a license to marry.

These government-sponsored contracts are at the center of the fight over same-sex unions. In the modern administrative state, civil marriage condenses within a single document a vast array of legal, financial, and medical rights and benefits. Like citizenship for the immigrant, it is a passport to a more secure world. As the old status of marriage has come to include such a range of contractual benefits, the debates over equality within and access to the institution have intensified.

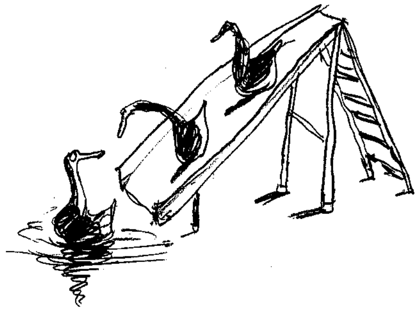
Owing to the reforms of the past forty years, men and women now enter the married state with more legal parity than ever before. Under the old doctrine of coverture, a man owned not only his wife's property but her body as well. Today, in nearly every state, men's and women's rights and obligations in alimony, child custody, child support, and property division in divorce have been made formally gender-neutral. Arrests and prosecutions for domestic abuse, rare thirty years ago, are now routine. As recently as 1984, a man could not be prosecuted for raping his own wife; today, it's a crime in all fifty states.

During the same period that the old patriarchal rules were being revised, the Supreme Court struck down a series of laws limiting the right of individuals to marry in the first place. In the most famous case, Loving v. Virginia, a unanimous Court held that anti-miscegenation laws were unconstitutional. "The freedom to marry has long been recognized as one of the vital personal rights essential to the orderly pursuit of happiness by free men," Chief Justice Warren wrote in 1967. A decade later, a Wisconsin law preventing people from marrying if they were behind on their child-support payments was overturned as too burdensome to the "basic civil rights of man." In 1987, the Rehnquist Court deemed the freedom to marry so fundamental that it could not be denied to prison inmates, whose other constitutional rights are routinely abrogated.

Those who opposed extending this right to same-sex couples used to cite the fact that many states outlawed sodomy: how could you sanction the marriage of people who could be arrested for what they did together in the bedroom? Then, last summer, in Lawrence v. Texas, the Court struck down the thirteen remaining sodomy laws in the country, and established a broad constitutional right to sexual privacy. The force and scope of the opinion surprised even its supporters. In a rare gesture, the Court not only overturned Bowers v. Hardwick, a 1986 opinion upholding a Georgia sodomy statute, but in essence apologized for it: "Its continuance as precedent demeans the lives of homosexual persons." The majority was careful to point out that the decision said nothing about the "formal recognition" of relationships. But opponents of same-sex marriage realized the decision's importance. As Justice Scalia warned in a caustic dissent, "If moral disapprobation of homosexual conduct is 'no legitimate state interest' . . . what justification could there possibly be for denying the benefits of marriage to homosexual couples exercising 'the liberty protected by the Constitution'? Surely not the encouragement of procreation, since the sterile and the elderly are allowed to marry." Five months later, the Massachusetts high court cited Lawrence in its decision.

Social conservatives now fear that, in the absence of a constitutional amendment to ban gay marriage, the Supreme Court will combine its precedents on the fundamental right to marry with the more recent decisions in favor of gay rights to give same-sex couples their own Loving v. Virginia—nationalizing gay marriage through constitutional interpretation. As a doctrinal matter, such fears are well grounded. Few legal scholars would disagree with Justice Scalia that Lawrence has made this outcome far more plausible.

Politically, however, a gay Loving is unlikely in the foreseeable future. The Supreme Court is seldom a force of social innovation. The first state to strike down its anti-miscegenation law was California, in 1948. For nearly two decades thereafter, all through the period of Brown v. Board of Education, the Court avoided the controversy over interracial marriage, exercising its discretion not to hear a case. By the time it decided Loving, fourteen states had followed California's lead, and only sixteen still maintained a ban. The Court endorsed what had become a majority position, if not in public opinion at least in legislative fact; the same can be said of Lawrence. The modern conservative obsession with what is selectively dubbed judicial activism has much to do with Roe v. Wade, and the fact that it struck down thirty state laws criminalizing abortion. No less an advocate of abortion rights than Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg has suggested that it may have been precipitate not to allow the states to come to a stronger consensus before the Court brought the reform process to an end. In the informal electorate of the states, the vote on full civil marriage for same-sex couples now stands at forty-nine to one. It is difficult to conceive of the Supreme Court recognizing a right to gay marriage under these circumstances.



Meanwhile, interest groups on both sides are lobbying legislators and filing more suits, in an attempt to shape the outcome in one jurisdiction at a time. As a legal matter, these are contests over the expansion of the rights and obligations of marriage. As a political and cultural matter, they are contests over something less easy to codify: the official recognition of love. Here the two most important developments in the history of marriage—secular regulation and the rise of the romantic-companionate ideal—become intertwined. The state is being asked not only to distribute benefits equally but to legitimate gay people's love and affection for their partners. The gay couples now marrying in Massachusetts want not only the same protections that straight people enjoy but the social status that goes along with the state's recognition of a romantic relationship.

This is the difference between civil unions and marriage: one is a legal certificate and the other is a public endorsement. Not surprisingly, many Americans who might support the first remain uncomfortable with the second. In "Gay Marriage" (Times Books; $22), the journalist Jonathan Rauch means to persuade such people that same-sex marriage will be good not only for gay people but for marriage in general. Rauch is a conservative—how many books garner blurbs from both George Will and Barney Frank?—and his argument for the benefits to gay people is based largely on the social discipline he thinks it would impose: once gay men and lesbians are allowed to wed, society can begin expecting them to do so, as it does straight people. "The gay rights era will be over and the gay responsibility era will begin," he writes. This soft coercion is a civilizing force, because "no other institution has the power to turn narcissism into partnership, lust into devotion, strangers into kin." We shouldn't expect results too soon, however: "As with the coming of capitalism to the Soviet empire, so with the coming of marriage to gay culture. Freedom and responsibility take time to learn." With analogies as inviting as this, one wonders whether snuggling gay lovers ought to take a bus tour of Putin's Russia before heading to the altar. Though clearly a true believer in matrimony, Rauch doesn't make it sound like much fun.

The real threat to marriage, he says, is the growth of registered cohabitation, from domestic partnerships to civil unions, which increasingly includes unwed heterosexuals. He warns that we are heading to the day when marriage—straight or gay—will become "merely an item on a mix-and-match menu of lifestyle options, a truffle in the candy box." For Rauch, whose view of marriage is more medicinal than confectionary, letting gays marry will actually help marriage by relieving the pressure to create alternatives.

What's undeniable is that the battle over same-sex marriage arrives at a time of declining participation in the institution itself. The number of marriages performed each year in the United States (2.3 million) is as low as it has ever been relative to the adult population. As Andrew Hacker has pointed out, nearly half of Americans reach the age of thirty without having married, and almost twelve per cent of women and sixteen per cent of men enter their forties still never having wed—the highest percentages in the nation's history.

As the numbers wane, though, the fantasy seems to grow more intense. The wedding industry generates at least seventy billion dollars a year in revenue, which is double the earnings of the movie business. Bridal magazines are some of the most profitable on the newsstand. The ersatz courtship of the Bachelor and the Bachelorette has provided some of the highest-rated television programming in recent years. At the same time, the pressures on the partnership that follows the wedding day are enormous: in an era of low civic participation and high economic insecurity, spouses are ever more relied upon as the sole providers of continuity and human solace. A state-sponsored, lifelong, intimate relationship—or the prospect of it—now carries a heavy and often unbearable responsibility for personal happiness.

What effect will allowing men to marry men and women to marry women have on our peculiarly modern venture of marriage? Proponents typically say that it will have hardly any—that there is no shortage of marriage licenses, and all that will happen is that more citizens and their children will have the benefits of existing family law. The opposition argues that one of the organizing institutions of our society will be imperilled.

History suggests that neither view is quite accurate. Despite comparisons to the repeal of miscegenation laws, no other expansion of the marriage franchise—to the sterile, to slaves, or to interracial couples—has required an alteration in the basic definition of the term: the union of a man and woman as husband and wife. To discount this as mere semantics misses what the definition points up: that marriage, through all its incarnations, has been a procedure that assigns people a new identity based on their gender. For centuries, it has been the ceremony that makes males into husbands and females into wives. Until very recently, this meant a lifetime commitment to both the security and the constriction of a well-defined social role. The symbolic danger that gay marriage poses to such an arrangement is obvious. It alters the public meaning of the word by further draining it of its power to reinforce traditional expectations of behavior. What does it mean to be a husband in a world where a man could have one of his own? This is up to each individual couple, one is tempted to say. Fair enough; but the words we use to describe our relationships are shared cultural property. There is no private language. In this sense, granting the word "marriage" to gay couples will eventually affect everyone.

The mistake is to consider the change in meaning particularly drastic. After all, undoing customary expectations for how a husband and wife behave toward each other has been one of the goals of the women's movement since its inception. Rather than an abrupt departure, same-sex marriage is the culmination of a larger and ultimately more consequential change in the nature of marital relations between men and women.

Which is one of the reasons that the opposition to it is so fierce. It has come to symbolize what is, historically speaking, radical about contemporary marriage: the decline of the patriarchal legal structure and the rise of the goal of self-fulfillment. Gay marriage is unsettling, to many, not because it departs from modern meanings of matrimony but because it embodies them. ♦

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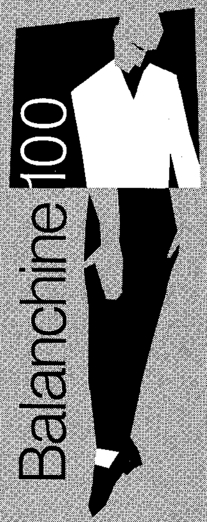

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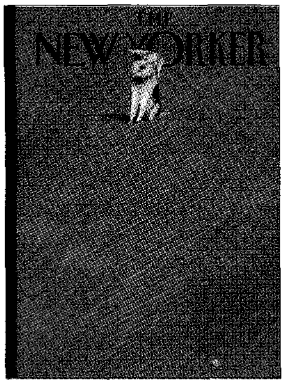

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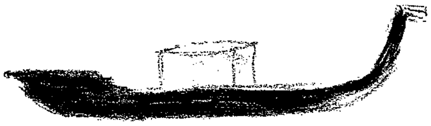
BRIEFLY NOTED

Eventide, *by Kent Haruf (Knopf; $24.95).* This bleak, compassionate book takes up where the author's widely acclaimed novel "Plainsong" left off, in the windy high-plains country in and around the tiny town of Holt, Colorado. Distress is general: out on their ranch, two stolid elderly brothers discover loneliness after the wayward girl they took in leaves for college; various troubles—illness, death, basic inability to cope—afflict the adults in town; and some young children are set adrift from disintegrating homes, with dangerous consequences. Every action in Holt casts a long shadow, and the gist of Haruf's story is what happens when those shadows touch. (The results are equal parts grace and calamity.) It's rare that such slow, deliberate prose is this highly charged, but Haruf's writing draws power from his sense of character—its limitations and its possibilities—and how it propels action.

The News from Paraguay, *by Lily Tuck (HarperCollins; $23.95).* Tuck's historical novel of nineteenth-century Paraguay is told largely through (and sometimes in the voice of) Ella Lynch, a blond, fair-skinned Irishwoman who, while a courtesan in Paris, met Francisco Solano Lopez, the son of Paraguay's dictator. She became his mistress and, after Lopez (known as Franco) succeeded his father, she was the most powerful woman in the country. As an Irishwoman in Paraguay, Tuck's Ella is an outsider. But so, in a way, is Franco, a megalomaniac who builds a theatre modelled on La Scala and wages a disastrous war against Brazil, Uruguay, and Argentina. Paraguay's malarial swamps and faux-European high society are the perfect setting for Tuck's dark wit, and her novel is quickened by such details as Ella's pink marble palace and her son's "necklace" made from the ears of enemy soldiers on a rawhide string.



Stalin: The Court of the Red Tsar, *by Simon Sebag Montefiore (Knopf; $30).* Any biography of a tyrant runs the risk of humanizing its subject to the point of appearing to mitigate his crimes. But Montefiore's intimate portrait actually throws the coldhearted murderousness with which Stalin pursued and defended power into sharper relief. The book—much of it based on fresh archival material—moves smoothly between detailed sketches of everyday life at the Kremlin and accounts of the paranoid and sanguinary scheming that determined Soviet politics. This juxtaposition captures the vertiginous quality of life in Stalin's court, where no allegiance was permanent. Just as strikingly, Montefiore shows how Stalin, a "master of friendships," used charm to win the support of members of the Party's inner circle (many of whom ended up regretting it). This haunting book gets us as close as we are likely to come to the man who believed that "the solution to every human problem was death."

Red Sky at Morning, *by James Gustave Speth (Yale; $24).* In the past two decades, the world's population has grown by thirty-five per cent, energy use by forty per cent, and automobile production by forty-five per cent. The level of carbon dioxide in the air is the highest it has been in nearly half a million years—and CO_2 emissions are projected to climb sixty per cent by 2025. Laying out the grim facts, Speth, who was an adviser to Presidents Carter and Clinton, and is the dean of the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies, sounds almost nostalgic for the days when the environmental crisis was all about aerosol sprays, factory smokestacks, and PCBs in the riverbed. Today, as he stresses, the crisis is global. But, rather than wait for grand international treaties, Speth thinks that individuals, N.G.O.s, corporations, and other groups ought to start their own initiatives to protect the environment and prevent an irreversible shift in climate. Forty years after "Silent Spring," we may be facing a long, hot summer.

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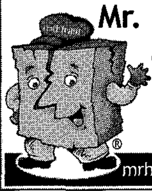

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THE SKY LINE

DOWN AT THE MALL

The new World War II memorial doesn't rise to the occasion.

BY PAUL GOLDBERGER

Few war memorials evoke deep, gut-wrenching emotion. Maya Lin's astonishingly simple Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington does, as does the U.S.S. Arizona memorial at Pearl Harbor, and Edwin Lutyens's Memorial to the Missing of the Somme, in France. But the majority of American memorials—for example, all those classical auditoriums, parks, band shells, boulevards, museums, and parkways dedicated to the dead of the First World War—are rather soft. Many of them were built for other reasons and then called memorials. That's not such a bad thing. The implicit message is that the soldiers and sailors did not die in vain; they died to preserve the civic life that these structures represent.

The new National World War II Memorial on the Mall in Washington seems to want to be majestic, but it's really an opulent, overbuilt civic plaza. The most important thing about it isn't the design, which is a vaguely classical set of colonnades by the architect Friedrich St. Florian, but the real estate it occupies. The memorial is set between the Lincoln Memorial and the Washington Monument. It is the first piece of construction to be placed on the great central axis of the Mall since those monuments were planned, more than a century ago.

The decision to give pride of place to the World War II memorial was made in 1995 by J. Carter Brown, the former director of the National Gallery of Art and, for much of his career, the powerful chairman of the Fine Arts Commission. The Iwo Jima memorial, across the Potomac in Arlington, a bronze statue based on the famous photograph of marines raising the American flag, had served as a kind of de-facto memorial to all the men who had fought in World War II, but an idea took shape that the members of "the greatest generation" needed an official, all-encompassing memorial. They had fought the last war that had nearly unanimous support among Americans, and they were dying off. Brown was determined to make a grand gesture, and he rejected sites along the edges of the Mall, even after the American Battle Monuments Commission and the National Capital Planning Commission had agreed to put a World War II memorial in Constitution Gardens, a landscaped area near the Vietnam memorial. Carter Brown wanted it built around the Rainbow Pool, at that time a rather tired-looking body of water at the east end of the long Reflecting Pool, which extends from the Lincoln Memorial toward the Capitol. He usually got his wish as far as artistic matters in Washington were concerned, and the middle of the Mall it was.

The architectural competition for the memorial was run by the General Services Administration, which treated the process more or less like the search for an architect for a regular government building and stipulated that experience would be a factor in the decision, all but assuring that an unknown designer with a fresh idea wouldn't have a chance. The rule was eventually relaxed, but the die was cast. Applicants were told that designs had to work with the Rainbow Pool, which would be spruced up as the new memorial's centerpiece, and this put a further brake on creativity. There were only some four hundred entries for the competition, compared with more than a thousand for the Vietnam memorial and more than five thousand for the Ground Zero memorial competition last year. St. Florian, a seventy-one-year-old architect and teacher who works in Providence, Rhode Island, won with a grandiose scheme that included fifty columns, each thirty-three feet tall; a set of embankments rising thirty-nine feet above the plaza surrounding the pool; and forty thousand square feet of underground space. The columns were arranged in two semicircles, one on the north side of the Rainbow Pool and the other on the south. St. Florian lowered the pool so that the memorial would not intrude too much on the views from the other memorials along the Mall, but that did little to reduce the overbearing quality of the design. Almost everybody hated it. A group called the National Coalition to Save Our Mall complained that it would overwhelm the vista between the Lincoln Memorial and the Washington Monument, and Bob Kerrey, then a senator from Nebraska, persuaded more than a dozen other senators, including Strom Thurmond, to sign a letter objecting to the scheme.

St. Florian was sent back to the drawing board and returned with a plan for something smaller. The embankments and the underground space disappeared, and the columns turned into metal shields with openings that made the design more transparent. It continued to evolve—in 1999, the shields became flattened pillars bearing sculpted bronze wreaths—but the tone of stolid, bland classicism remained. The version that got built has two semicircles of pillars, each representing a state or a territory, arrayed on either side of two forty-three-foot-tall arched entry pavilions symbolizing the European and Pacific theatres of the war. There is a formal entrance on the Seventeenth Street side, directly in line with the Lincoln Memorial, but most people will probably enter through one of the pavilions, walking under a ten-foot-wide bronze laurel wreath suspended from a bronze ribbon held in the beaks of bronze eagles set atop columns. From there, one descends a gentle, curving ramp to the level of the Rainbow Pool and the granite plaza. The pool is the focal point, not only because it is huge and occupies the center of the plaza but because its newly restored fountains give the memorial much of its visual energy—what there is of it. The fountains and the curving granite ramps and the sculpted granite benches beneath them overwhelm the most sober aspect of the memorial, Freedom Wall, on the west side of the plaza, which contains more than four thousand gold stars, each representing a hundred war dead. The words "HERE WE MARK THE PRICE OF FREEDOM" are engraved in a low stone panel in front of the wall, but the dead are not identified by name, and there are no images of war anywhere in the memorial, except in some small decorative bas-reliefs by the sculptor Raymond Kaskey.

A pool at the center of the granite-paved plaza is surrounded by pillars representing the states. Photograph by Robert Polidori.

The bronze eagles, which were designed by Kaskey, are beautifully wrought, and the stonework—the memorial is built of silvery granite from South Carolina and Georgia—is stunning in its execution. In an age when cheap, thin veneers pass for real stonework, it is pleasing to see stone that has been treated like stone, and carved by craftsmen who

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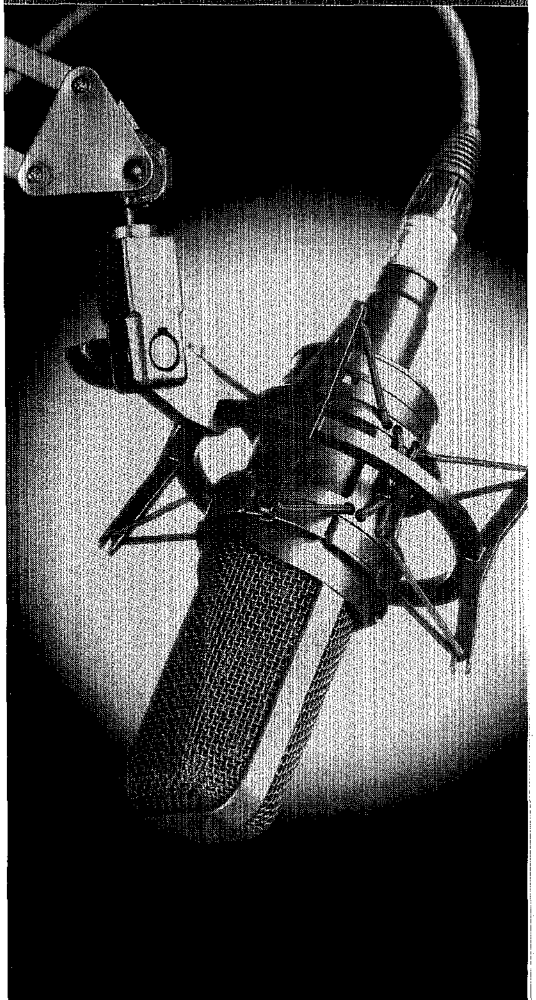

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know what they are doing. But the design, in the end, is banal and timid, overly concerned with being well mannered. And what, finally, is the connection between the states and the war? Soldiers fighting abroad were not grouped by states and did not, I suspect, particularly identify with them. And there is no connection whatsoever between the states that are attached to the Atlantic pavilion and those attached to the Pacific pavilion; the whole arrangement is a conceit, dictated by the desire to turn the names of places into the elements of a symmetrical architectural composition.

During the design process, it was the memorial's stripped-down classicism that seemed most likely to be a problem. A lot of critics, including me, fretted about Albert Speer and Fascist architecture. That turns out not to be an issue at all. Mussolini or Speer would have overpowered you, and this memorial is welcoming. But a memorial ought to tug at the emotions in some profound way. What strikes you when you stand in the center of the World War II memorial is the sweep of the vista from the Lincoln Memorial to the Capitol, which is exactly what was moving about being in this space before. That a chunk of the space is now paved in elegantly carved granite and has some handsome bronze sculptures and spectacular fountains doesn't tell you much that you didn't already know.

There is a deep, unresolved contradiction at the heart of this project, and it emerges from the specifics of the site. On the one hand, the Mall is a great public space, as essential a part of the American landscape as the Grand Canyon. It has to be respected. On the other hand, a war memorial is serious business, and honoring four hundred thousand dead and the millions who served with them is not the sort of enterprise that naturally takes on a low profile. It is fundamentally at odds with the right way to use this piece of land.

The Lincoln Memorial works as well as it does partly because it is at the end of the Mall, terminating the vista, and not near the middle, but also because the designer, Henry Bacon, had absolute clarity of vision. He didn't want to make a user-friendly memorial. He wanted to make an inspiring one, and he did. Bacon wanted classical architecture to show Lincoln's greatness and, through that, the importance of the Union. In Bacon's temple, you have no choice but to think of what Lincoln meant. You don't have a choice in Maya Lin's memorial, either. The stark reality of more than fifty thousand names engraved on Lin's stone wall is staggering, and the subtlety of the relationship between the wall and the landscape—we descend, then rise again, as if to return to the land of the living—is deeply moving. The descent to the Rainbow Pool doesn't lend itself to that kind of experience. The memorial is a perfectly fine plaza, such as it is, and it has turned out to be far less damaging to the space than many people had feared. But it exudes a kind of well-meaning hollowness. The layout comes from the site, and from the desire to make a pleasant public plaza that will not overwhelm the great monuments on either side.

The people who make decisions about architecture in Washington—government bureaucrats, members of the Fine Arts Commission, and city-planning officials—have never been particularly open to new kinds of architectural expression. As the years pass, the freshness and brilliance of Maya Lin's Vietnam Veterans Memorial seems increasingly like a lucky accident. A fear of modernism has led to weak and pompous buildings, like the Kennedy Center and the Rayburn House Office Building, which weren't simply a consequence of trying to save money, the way bad buildings often are in New York and other cities. In Washington, the government usually pays top dollar. Of course, the fondness for watered-down classicism also brought us the Federal Triangle, an urbane collection of government buildings, erected in the nineteen-thirties, which knitted together several blocks of downtown Washington and gave it dignity. Classicism, even timid classicism, is a good urban tool. It creates a sense of coherence and order. But a memorial isn't supposed to be part of a larger urban order. It is supposed to be a special place. The genius of the Mall is that it juxtaposes the monumental and the everyday. The World War II memorial throws things off balance. It tries to make the Mall more important and more inviting at the same time, and it ends up doing neither. ♦

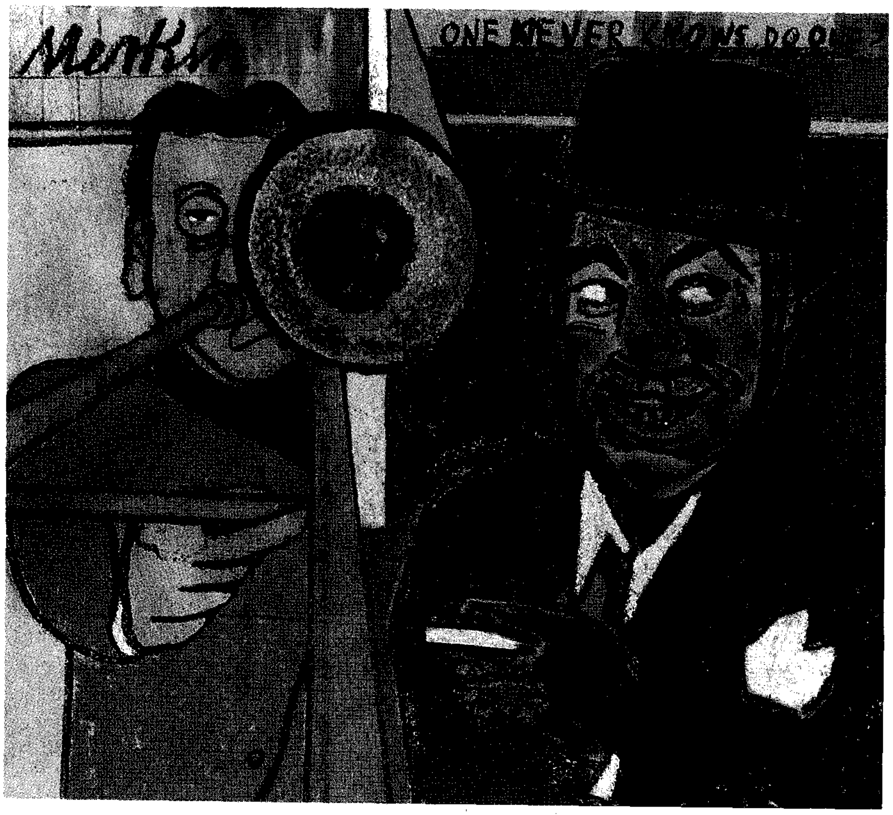
JAZZ

STRIDE AND SWING

The enduring appeal of Fats Waller and Glenn Miller.

BY GARY GIDDINS

Glenn Miller and Fats Waller were born in the same year, 1904, and died on the same date, December 15th. In 1943, returning from a tour of the West Coast, Waller died of pneumonia at the age of thirty-nine. One year later, Major Glenn Miller's plane disappeared over the English Channel en route to a victory concert in Paris. He is now believed to have been the victim of Allied bombers dropping payload from a higher altitude. The works of both are now available in anniversary collections that illuminate the enduring appeal of mush and mockery at the hotly contested border between jazz and pop.


Merkin
ONE NEVER KNOWS, DO ONE?

Two centennial albums belie critical stereotypes of black cool and white corn.

RICHARD MERKIN

Few pop idols survive changing fashions unscathed, but Miller and Waller seem to have done just that. One might have expected the renown of Glenn Miller, a hard-nosed martinet who devised the big-band sound most associated with reveries of the nineteen-forties, to fade with memories of the war in which he lost his life. Instead, critics who once denigrated him as a humorless purveyor of diluted swing, banal novelties, and saccharine vocals are reassessing a sound that clings relentlessly to the collective memory. The ongoing preëminence of Thomas (Fats) Waller is perhaps less of a surprise, given the dazzle of his pianism, the thumping pleasures of his small band, and the frequent hilarity of his satire. Still, considering how much of his popularity derived from vocal parodies of Tin Pan Alley detritus, one is inclined to echo his trademark meditation: "One never knows, do one?" Waller's comedy has grown in stature; critics no longer write of it defensively, blaming RCA Victor, his record label (and Mil-

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ler's), for forcing him into the role of jester. In short, as with Miller, the public was right and the critics are playing catchup.

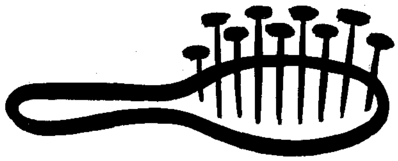
We do better to consider the overlooked similarities between Miller and Waller than to belabor their obvious differences. Too much has been made of a racial divide that turned them into emblems of black cool and white corn—stereotypes typified by, say, Waller's serenade to marijuana, "If You're a Viper," and Miller's plea for home-front fidelity, "Don't Sit Under the Apple Tree." It's true that Miller reached millions of whites for whom the names Ellington and Basie meant little and that Waller was characterized as "that hot man of Harlem" trafficking in "rhythmic hot-cha." But everyone danced to Miller, and more whites than blacks bought Waller records.

They had much in common. Waller recorded his share of unadulterated corn while Miller's resourceful swing arrangements mitigate his many soggy vocal records. They also shared a penchant for hiring capable but unexciting musicians, notably their tenor saxophonists—Miller's Tex Beneke, who also sang, and Waller's Gene Sedric—who were little more than B-list versions of Coleman Hawkins (whose centenary also falls this year). The era inspired similar goals: Waller encouraged people to laugh through the privations of the thirties; Miller induced them to romanticize American values during wartime. Both kept America's feet tapping and bodies swaying with a steady beat, and both used jazz as a conduit to reach a larger public than jazz per se could command—witness their prompt summonses to Hollywood. Both were defined by the times; now they define those times for us.

Waller's pinnacle as a recording artist, from 1934 to 1939, directly preceded Miller's (which began in 1939, with "Moonlight Serenade"). But Waller had been a force in New York from the beginning of his career, achieving widespread recognition for the stream of popular songs—including "Ain't Misbehavin'," "Black and Blue," and "Honeysuckle Rose"—he wrote for the 1929 revues "Hot Chocolates" and "Load of Coal." Among musicians, he won greater acclaim for an astonishing body of piano music, which brought a Mendelssohnian composure to the charged Harlem stride style of James P. Johnson. Waller's serene touch, unerring rhythmic tact, and treasury of melodic ideas established him in New York's jazz and theatrical vanguards long before he moved into the mainstream, in the mid-thirties, with a six-piece band, Fats Waller and His Rhythm.

From then on, Waller's regimen in the studios was unparalleled. He recorded some five hundred sides, working with no time for rehearsal, and often with material that few others would touch. He proved himself able to alchemize even the dreariest songs ("You're Not the Only Oyster in the Stew") into nuggets of pure swing. In doing so, he transformed himself into the irrepressible derby-crowned dandy instantly recognizable today. This was hardly a sellout. Waller's technical ease and emotional undercurrent are no less apparent on his popular records than in his formal solos. The feathery detachment and weighty bravura juxtaposed in "Then I'll Be Tired of You" is, in its way, as impressive as the dense compositional ingenuity of "African Ripples." His nimble vocals, whether droll or moving, reflect a knack for instantly sizing up which notes or lyrics are best served straight up, mixed with bitters, or injected with spritzer. Thus he bestows a kind of immortality on songs never intended to transcend their provenance.

These numbers are included on Bluebird's "Centennial Collection," selected by Mike Lipskin, himself an accomplished stride pianist, who has daringly ignored obvious hits (no "Honeysuckle Rose") in favor of a fresh program. By contrast, Miller's "Centennial Collection" is a predictable assemblage, which means too many Ray Eberle vocals and an obligatory dose of wartime infantilism—"The Boogie Wooglie Piggy," with Miller's rather creepy vocal group, the Modernaires, harmonizing the oinks. This is too bad, because Miller is overdue for a compilation of his best work, which might include, for example, his splendid forty-two-piece Army Air Force Band's startling performance of "Mission to Moscow." (The piece was arranged for Miller by Mel Powell, who later made his career



as an avant-garde classical composer.) Instead, we get a mood-killing electronica remix of "Pennsylvania 6-5000" and a DVD with home movies in which no one is identified.

By the time Miller achieved stardom, at the age of thirty-five, he had endured more than a decade of freelance arranging and whatever sideman gigs his limited abilities as a trombonist allowed, and it seems likely that this left him somewhat bitter. He once told the critic John Hammond, who had reviewed him disdainfully, that he ought not to be criticized, because his only interest was in making money. Miller exuded little warmth on or off the bandstand, but once the band struck up its theme, audiences were done for: throats clutched, eyes softened. Can any other record match "Moonlight Serenade" for its ability to induce a Pavlovian slaver in so many for so long?

It was James Stewart who created a suitable posthumous personality for Miller, in "The Glenn Miller Story," the 1954 film that inaugurated a genre of musicals about white bandleaders. These pictures, though basted in conformity, flattered the taste of the nineteen-fifties audience by recasting them as young radicals braving ridicule. Miller was depicted as an innovator hunting for an elusive sound, and Stewart had to recite breathtaking inanities like "To me, music is more than just one instrument. It's a whole orchestra playing together." Miller himself offered a more credible precept in the lyric to his 1942 hit "Juke Box Saturday Night": "Mixin' hot licks with vanilla."

That modest recipe gave him his identity. It remains unmistakable: a clarinet playing lead, supported by closely harmonized saxophones with responses from a large brass section (often muted to minimize vibrato) and a politely clumping four-man rhythm section. Less widely noted were Miller's affinity for dissonance and his tendency to combine the twelve-bar blues with thirty-two-bar song form. Yet, once he found a winning combination, he did not much waver and soon delegated "the Miller sound" to superior arrangers like Jerry Gray and Bill Finegan, who, in effect, out-Millered Miller.

The formula reached perfection in three masterpieces of jazz-influenced pop. "Moonlight Serenade" began life as an exercise that Miller worked on for an arranging course. It failed as a conventional song with lyrics and might have disappeared had he not dressed it in what would become his trademark sound. The clarinet lead, handsomely intoned by Wilbur Schwartz, and the swaying melody pinned to the first beat of each measure evoke a vanished age, even for those who never knew the age. "In the Mood," which all but defines swing for those who grew up with it in the forties and fifties (or the nineties, when it became the refrain of retro swing), is a blues punctuated by a sixteen-bar middle section. Miller's recording is almost entirely patched together from jazz's spare parts. The key phrase had previously served Wingy Manone in "Tar Baby Stomp" and Fletcher Henderson in "Hot and Anxious," and the famous episode in which the orchestra fades down had been similarly used by Goodman to soup up "Don't Be That Way." The genteel saxophone exchanges imitate the genuine saxophone duels popular at the time, while the startling ascending coda by the brasses suggests an inversion of the legendary Louis Armstrong cadenza that opens "West End Blues." Yet the resulting performance is unmistakably Milleresque in every measure. More affecting is "A String of Pearls," a quintessential Miller piece that Miller didn't write (it was the work of Jerry Gray). The undulating theme combines eight- and twelve-measure formats. The contrast between the high reeds and the bass-clef responses is palpable, and Bobby Hackett's lyrical trumpet solo draws the blues as far from its roots as anyone could until Miles Davis explored related harmonies after the war.

Miller and Waller embody the A side and B side of a time when melodic tranquillity and robust rhythms found common cause. People who come of age in such a period think it will last forever—ask any veteran of Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band. But the swing era expired in short order; hip-hop is already twice its age. The end of the war brought about the end of the big bands, and the music that followed—bebop, R. & B.—moved away from gentle lyricism and foxtrot rhythms. But swing, however short-lived, has much to teach us. Beyond the pleasures of their performances, Waller and Miller provide an unexpected service: they humble critical stereotypes and show ways that jazz and pop once enriched each other, and might still. ♦

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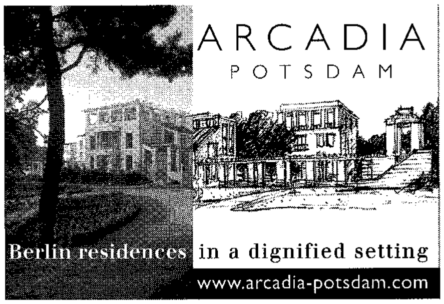

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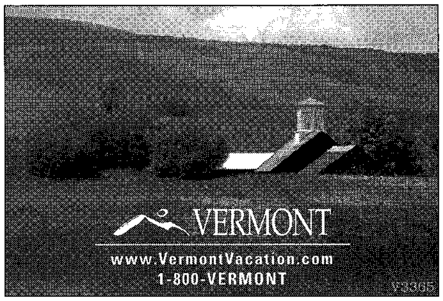

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OUTSIDERS

"Saved!" and "Baadasssss!"

BY DAVID DENBY

Mary (Jena Malone), the sweet-natured heroine of the satirical comedy "Saved!," is in a pool conferring underwater with her boyfriend, Dean (Chad Faust), when Dean tells her, bubbles coming out of his mouth, that he's gay. The two of them are seniors at American Eagle Christian High School, in Maryland, and Mary resolves to do what Jesus wants her to do, which, she decides, is to save Dean's soul from the curse of homosexuality by making love to him. As luck would have it, Dean has been lying in bed perusing the magazine *Honcho*, so he's inadvertently warmed up when Mary bursts into his bedroom. The deed is done, and the result is that Mary gets pregnant. "Saved!," a small-scale production (the budget was under five million dollars), written by Brian Dannelly and Michael Urban and directed by Dannelly, is too gently fashioned to go in for the kill; the filmmakers refrain from exploiting the juicy blasphemy inherent in the situation of a girl named Mary mysteriously getting pregnant—the pregnancy doesn't even become a scandal at the school, where almost no one knows about it. The movie has its targets, but Mary, a smart girl with the strength to change her ideas as she grows up, isn't one of them. Jena Malone delivers her lines with guileless enthusiasm, and we laugh with affection, not derision, when she announces, "I've been born again my whole life." Dannelly and Urban, first-time filmmakers, don't have the ruthlessness of dedicated satirists like the writer-director team of Jim Taylor and Alexander Payne, whose movies "Citizen Ruth" and "Election" are modern classics. But satire can sting without being ruthless. "Saved!" is a minor work, yet it has a teasing lilt to it, and to make it at all took courage and originality.

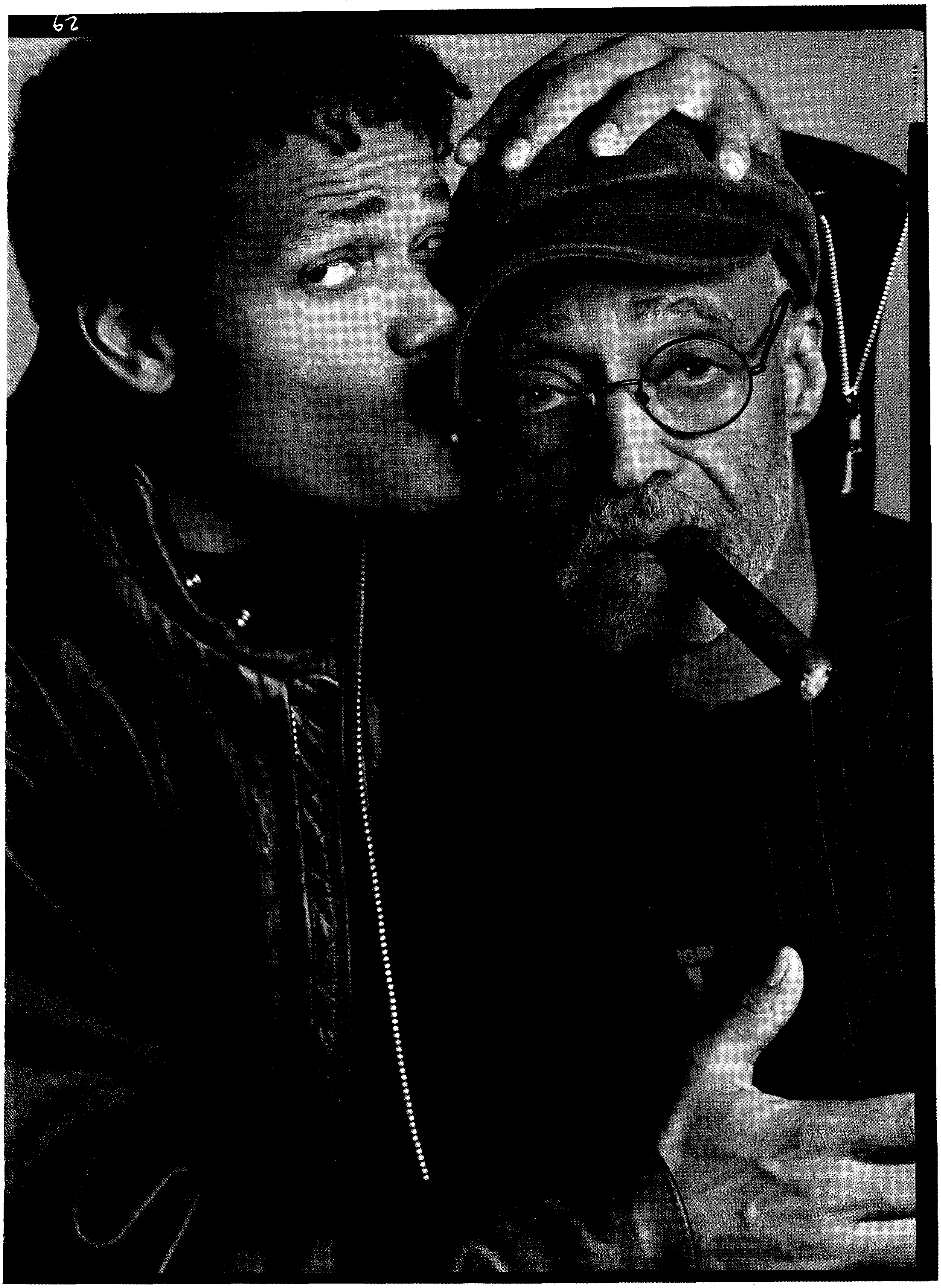
Dannelly and Urban seem to have got the movie financed by folding their satire into a mean-girls genre comedy. Set in a suburban high school, "Saved!" features the usual quarrels, flirtations, pranks, and nuzzling friendships. It ends, as these movies almost always do, at the prom, and its villain, Hilary Faye (Mandy Moore), is the familiar blond bitch who has everything going for her but wants more and more power. Hilary is the lead singer of the school pop group, the Christian Jewels, and she's always praying for people, or trying to convert them, or telling them what Jesus wants them to do. (She plants the idea that Mary will achieve "a virginal heart" by sleeping with Dean.) Officious and sarcastic at the same time, she is followed around by blank-eyed girls who say things like "I think Jesus appeared to me in my fish tank." Even at a shooting range, Hilary drops the Saviour's name into every third sentence and assumes that God must be on her side. "Saved!" is not an attack on Christianity; if anything, the movie wants to reassert the Christian spirit. But it goes after pious hypocrites, the kind of people who never stop speaking of love yet find an unaccountably large number of folks to hate.

"Saved!" was shot in Vancouver, and it has a bright, sunshiny look to it, as if a strong moral disinfectant had been applied to the streets, the lawns, the school corridors. Dannelly and Urban drop hints here and there of the panoply of Christian youth culture around the edges of the school: the organizations and rock bands that parallel similar groups in secular pop culture; the prayer meetings, retreats, and "mercy centers" in which people are "cured" of their very human problems. As the movie tells it, the group spirit offers a sense of belonging to teen-agers who suffer from an uncertain identity. But the communal embrace comes at a high price—sheer panic at the thought of anyone who might be even slightly different. In "Saved!," fundamentalist Christianity is just the latest and most exclusionary version of American conformity. The heroes of the movie are the school's irregulars, who receive Mary as a friend: Patrick (Patrick Fugit), a Christian skateboarding champion who has an open mind and an easy way with girls; Cassandra (Eva Amurri), "the first Jew at American Eagle," a cocky prankster who starts speaking in tongues at a school assembly; and Hilary's brother, Roland (Macaulay Culkin), who is wheelchair-bound and witty. Culkin, the slyly resourceful star of the "Home Alone" series, has turned into a pale, slender young man with a long face, sleepy eyes, and protuberant lips. He has developed a sardonic way of underplaying—his quietly amused sang-froid here could mark the beginnings of a fey comic style.

Dannelly's direction is a little slapdash; some of the comic ideas are only half worked out, and the plot falls into place much too conveniently. By turning the outsiders into such good guys, and by advocating such unimpeachable virtues as sexual liberation, tolerance, and friendship, the filmmakers have made things easy for themselves and for any audience likely to attend a satire like "Saved!" (M-G-M's attempt to advance-market the picture to groups who loved "The Passion of the Christ" seems a blunder worthy of the loonier characters in the movie.) None of the outsiders is a real troublemaker—a freethinker, for instance, who might say something nastily perceptive about the religious temper of the school. Nor is there a student with a genuine religious vocation—a non-phony Jesus freak who worships without hypocrisy, and who would complicate our responses to the frauds at American Eagle. And by the end of "Saved!" Dannelly and Urban have fallen into wish fulfillment. Mary gets to keep her baby (she doesn't even consider abortion), and

PHOTOGRAPH BY RICHARD AVEDON

Mario and Melvin Van Peebles. The son directs and stars in a movie about a movie the father directed and starred in.



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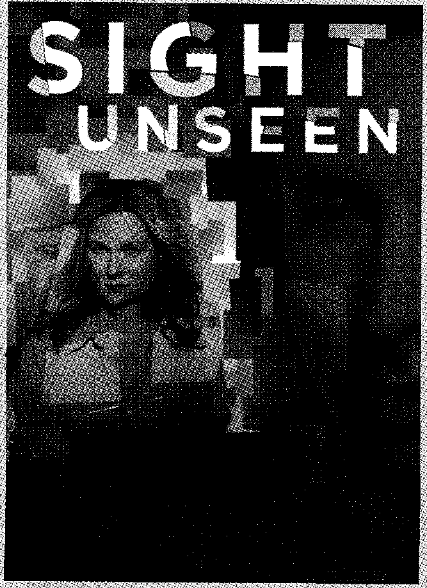

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she gets to keep something all the other girls want as well. Even God, who has been known to arrange a happy ending now and then, might have hesitated before giving in so completely to a good girl's fantasies.

Mario Van Peebles's "Baadasssss!" brings a new kind of candor to film biography. In 1971, Mario's father, Melvin Van Peebles, a novelist, filmmaker, and composer, made the X-rated blaxploitation movie "Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song." The picture starred Van Peebles himself as a bordello stud performer in Los Angeles who gets arrested and beaten by white cops, kills two of them, and manages to escape (the movie concluded with Van Peebles running endlessly over hill and dale). "Sweetback" wasn't very good—in fact, it was a mess—but the naked (in all senses) assertiveness of the Van Peebles superman struck a chord among urban blacks ready to celebrate a lawless hero who stood up to whites and came away a winner. "Sweetback" introduced black street language and attitudes into the movies and became a big hit. Cruddy as the picture was, it did have some shock value; it certainly wasn't slick and derivative, like "Shaft" and other blaxploitation films that merely reversed the racial polarities of old genre movies. Mario Van Peebles, thirteen at the time, worked on the film as a member of the crew and as an actor—he was forced by his father to appear, in a flashback sequence, as young Melvin losing his virginity, also at thirteen. In "Baadasssss!," Mario Van Peebles re-creates, from start to finish, the making of "Sweetback" and the convulsive life around the production. Now in his mid-forties, he plays his father at roughly the same age, and, following his father, he wrote the movie (with Dennis Haggerty), co-produced it, and directed it. He has not just stepped into his father's shoes; he has appropriated Melvin Van Peebles's body, his demeanor, his actions, and his treatment of his family (i.e., himself). It is as if he were assuming responsibility for his father's life.

Mario's story of Melvin goes this way: in 1970, after directing the successful comedy "Watermelon Man," starring Godfrey Cambridge, Van Peebles turned his back on the glad-handing executives ("Mel, baby!") who were offering him a three-picture deal, and, cigar in mouth, hat cocked at an angle, set about making "Sweetback" in Los Angeles with whatever money he could find. In "Baadasssss!," he comes off as a devious, guarded, egotistical son of a bitch. As Mario tells it, however, his father had no choice but to be manipulative. The people willing to help him were mostly creeps who wanted to compete with him or go to bed with him or hide their drug money in the budget of his film. "Baadasssss!" is a record of blind improvisation: Melvin the existential hero makes himself up as he goes along, hiring thugs and semi-unemployables, shooting when he has only half an idea of what he wants. The movie captures some of the desperation and the easy pleasures of the period—the tumbling-into-bed sex and the self-delusions by which people having a good time, or an outlaw time, convinced themselves that they were making a revolution (the same could be said of Melvin Van Peebles, of course). Working in brief, charged fragments, Mario Van Peebles creates what can only be called a lucid fantasia; the movie quickly reaches a pitch of manic activity and stays there. It's an exhausting, and exhaustingly pleasurable, entertainment.

Mario's take on his father goes beyond love and beyond Oedipal revenge, too, though both elements are there. By playing Melvin, Mario makes the toughness and the egotism seem comprehensible—this is what his dad had to do, even when it meant humiliating his own child in a sex scene. Mario has said that he forgives his father, but his movie is more ambivalent. He wants both to praise the old man as a filmmaker and to top him (and he does with this movie, which is far more expressive than "Sweetback")—and to top him as a human being, too. In all, despite the ambivalence, "Baadasssss!" is a celebration, though some of us may not regard "Sweetback" as the revolutionary event that Mario Van Peebles makes it out to be. Or we might want to say something a little different—that "Sweetback" began a revolution in show business but not in culture. What neither Van Peebles is likely to admit is that the black street awareness that seems raw and even dangerous in one period can be commercialized and tamed into the redundant suburban entertainment of the next. ♦

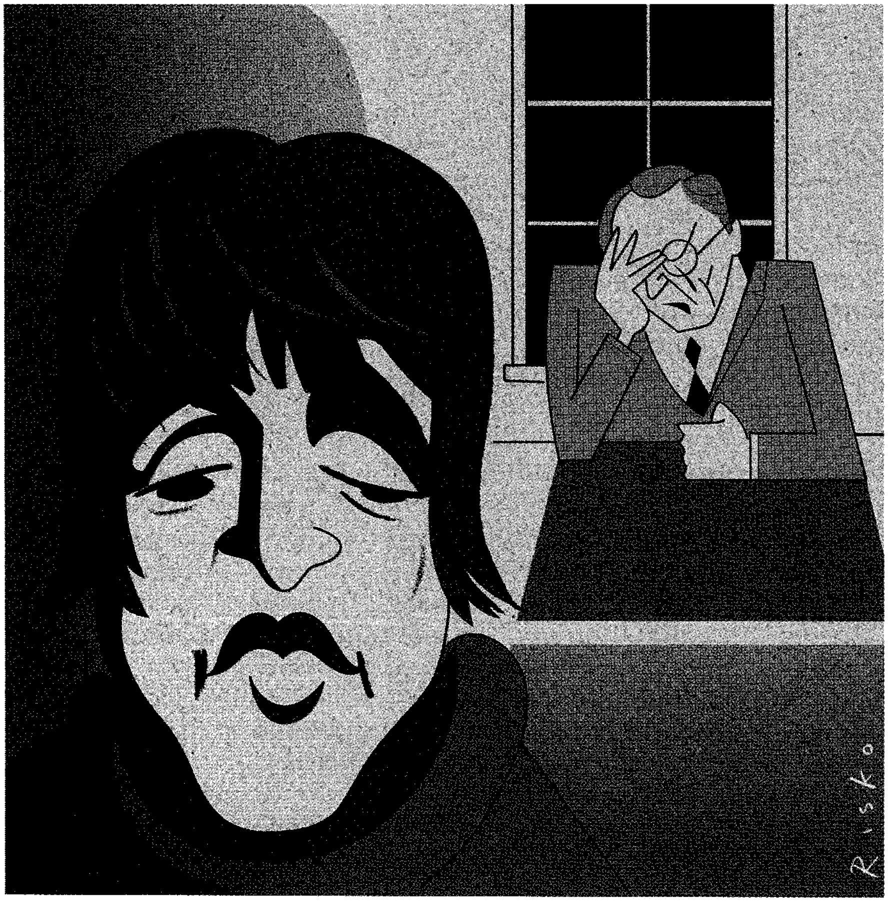
THE THEATRE

DOWN AND OUT

Twenty-seven characters in search of a play.

BY JOHN LAHR

We all need stories, but the story we need most is the continually revised one that we tell about ourselves. In Julia Jordan's accomplished but opaque "Boy" (directed by Joe Calarco, at Primary Stages), there's a lot of worrying about narrative and a desperate attempt by the characters to change the plots of their lives. A thirty-something slacker, Mick (Kelly AuCoin), returns to the Twin Cities after three hapless years of trying to make it as an actor in New York. No sooner has he crawled through the bedroom window of his ex-girlfriend Sara (Miriam Shor), intent on getting back together with her—a middle-of-the-night entrance that fairly screams of an adolescent problem with boundaries—than he is complaining not about the trials of his own life but about George Eliot's "Mill on the Floss," a book that happens to be on the reading list of the community-college English-literature course that his mother teaches. "Everything is going along, you know, story, story, story, story. All good," he says. "And then there's this flood and everyone drowns. For absolutely no good reason." He adds, "Five hundred and forty-six pages to get to that. Makes you want to drown her." Mick, it seems, is offended by unhappy endings—a bias he shares with most of Jordan's characters, who, despite their struggles to survive, are all nonetheless somehow drowning.



Julia Jordan's scenes are disturbing and sharp, but they remain resolutely ambiguous.

ROBERT RISKO

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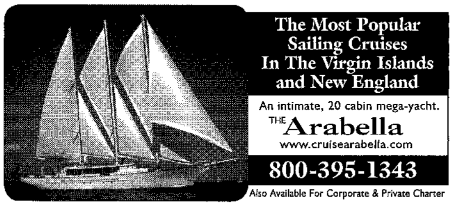
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O'Connell), is frustrated in her teaching career; she's also seething at her husband, Terry (Robert Hogan), a psychiatrist, whose depression—he has frequent panic attacks during which he is unable to breathe—she sees as just another manipulative ploy to keep her bound to him. "I'm done. I'm not doing it anymore. And he needs to know it," says Maureen, who has staked out an independent life for herself. Disappointment has made her brusque and a little cruel. "Where is everybody?" Mick asks, looking around the kitchen when he first arrives home. "They've grown up. They have homes," Maureen replies. As mother and son bicker, Mick incidentally admits to hating Raymond Carver—"so small . . . the ennui and the minuscule lives." Maureen fires back, "Life is small." It is also, as her sourness implies, long. Her disapproval of Mick's choices in life—she feels that he has wasted his critical intelligence and forfeited what could have been a stellar academic career—is pitched against the fervor of her belief in the writing talent of one of her students, who is identified in the script only as "Boy" (T. R. Knight). A seventeen-year-old who survived a teen-age suicide pact that claimed the lives of four of his friends and left him partially paralyzed by carbon-monoxide poisoning, the Boy has a gift for storytelling that is the catalyst for everything that follows in the twenty-four hours covered by the play. (The audience is asked to take the Boy's talent on faith; what we hear from the stage offers little evidence of his intuitive brilliance.)

As the scenes switch back and forth in time, we learn that the Boy is trying somehow to put himself into Mick's family story—enrolling in Maureen's class, going to Terry for therapy, and, finally, making contact with Mick himself, whom he befriends online after Mick sells him a deluxe vaporizer. (For the Boy, who is a fervid pothead, this is the equivalent of finding the Holy Grail.) The Boy suggests that he and Mick become partners in "the business of happiness"—that is, mass-marketing vaporizers. "I'll be like one of the family," he says. "We'll all talk about things of interest and, like, import and all."

Throughout these encounters, the Boy is compelled by a narrative mission: to unravel and articulate his own dark life story. "Maybe you don't know how to tell it yet," Terry says. "I want to make sure you know what happened. Put an end on it. Like in a story. A beginning, middle, and end." The Boy looks at the paralyzed left side of his body. "What kind of story would that be, with such a stupid fuckin' end?" he says. The Boy admits to the dark content of his narratives, but he doesn't want to live with their unsettling conclusions; his fiction all ends abruptly, with the same two sentences: "And then they all got really, really high and lived happily ever after. The end." When he is reproached for this, he explains, "At some point you just gotta wrap that shit up." In his own crude way—the stage directions describe him as "wicked smart but without the vocabulary of the overeducated"—the Boy is talking about closure. The issue has huge existential overtones: Is character destiny? Can good endings be engineered from bad life stories? If fiction is the model to go by, changing the ending involves restructuring the entire life. "The end of every story, the perfect uncrappy ending, is part and parcel of the beginning and middle and that's why it is the end, the only ending," Maureen tells the Boy.

Precision in storytelling, however, is something that Jordan, too, needs to work on. Her scenes are disturbing and sharp, but they remain resolutely ambiguous. It is as if the audience had wandered into a vivid dreamscape in which everything appears significant but nothing is meaningful. In the play's penultimate scene, which, we discover, leads back to the beginning, Maureen is venting her rancor about Terry, whom Mick "idolizes," when Terry staggers into the kitchen. He has been unmoored by the Boy's account of his suicide pact. The Boy, who has his own understanding of trauma, sees right through his psychiatrist. "You think about it, don't you," he says to Terry. "Getting in the car, turning on the engine, and not opening the garage door." Now, in front of his family, Terry falls to the floor, gasping for air. When Mick kneels over him, Maureen pulls him away, scratching his face—this is the unexplained scratch, we realize, that he brought with him to Sara's bedroom in the first scene of the play. We are in the middle of some sort of family triangle. Is this Terry's way of holding on to his son, or his wife? Maureen's way of forcing her son out? The play is full of these kinds of inferences and cross-references but offers no conclusions. It is as if Jordan had erased just enough of the dots in her outline of events for the audience not to be quite able to connect the ones that are left.

At the end of the play, Mick agrees to give up acting and finish his Ph.D.; on that basis, Sara seems on the verge of taking him back. "Could this be it? A happy ending?" he asks her. "It's a possibility," she says, at the curtain. But not a good one, I think. As the play's title indicates, the terrain here is immaturity. Within twenty-four hours, Mick has capitulated to his mother's plans for him, and his parents, despite their seeming distaste for each other, have been knitted back together in some sort of dysfunctional yet symbiotic relationship.

Jordan dramatizes her characters' choices but not the reasons that they're made. To live with ambiguity is to live with vulnerability, she seems to be saying—which is why people rush into action. "Boy" presents its characters' solutions as antidotes to anxiety, a way of lending a sense of motion to stalled, fragile lives. But her inability to let the audience in on the cause of that anxiety ultimately renders her play as frustrating as it is haunting.

The characters in "Boy" may be searching for a psychological and emotional home, but at least they have a roof over their heads. The homeless people in Kia Corthron's "Light Raise the Roof" (at the New York Theatre Workshop) lack even that. The play opens to the sound of hammering; for the first few minutes, Corthron seems to have hit on a marvellous, even magical theatrical conceit. Before our eyes, a homeless self-proclaimed architect called Cole (Chris McKinney) engineers dwellings for his forlorn clients, who pay chump change for his ingenious constructions. Cole intuitively understands that space contributes to a feeling of coherence and safety; to be without a home is to be a refugee—bewildered, disoriented, psychically frozen.

But, having shown us Cole's obsession and his accomplishment, "Light Raise the Roof" more or less collapses. None of the characters are well delineated; no ideas are teased out, beyond the most rudimentary and mortifying facts of life for New York City's thirty-eight thousand homeless; and the actors are as flat and arch as the play's rhythms. Take Cole's speech, addressed to a stammering, demented white man named Zekie (Robert Beitzel), who has a gift for design: "We nigh onto clashin' pretty in our sights, livin' compartments, units. You liketa come 'round with me? Helper? Apprentice. You like that?" There is a play here, but the director, Michael John Garcés, hasn't been able to call it out of the author. Of all the lacerating humiliations that the homeless must endure, a duff play about their plight is one indignity too many. ♦

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THE BACK PAGE BY NOAH BAUMBACH

THE BLOCKBUSTER EFFECT

> "Urgent: HQ Direction," began a message e-mailed on April 1 to dozens of scientists and officials at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center in Greenbelt, Md. It was not an alert about an incoming asteroid, a problem with the space station or a solar storm. It was a warning about a movie. In "The Day After Tomorrow," a $125 million disaster film set to open on May 28, global warming from accumulating smokestack and tailpipe gases disrupts warm ocean currents and sets off an instant ice age. . . . [T]he prospect that moviegoers will be alarmed enough to blame the Bush administration for inattention to climate change has stirred alarm at the space agency, scientists there say. —*The Times.*

To: ZeroGravity16@NASA.gov
From: Apollo257@NASA.gov
Subject: Extremely Urgent

Just got the *Entertainment Weekly* Summer Movie Preview issue. Have you read the plot summary to "Spider-Man 2"? He fights Doctor Octopus in this one. I did some research: before Doc Ock became a supervillain he was AN ATOMIC SCIENTIST!!

My concern is this: that the public will assume that our nuclear scientists are being bombarded by radiation and taking to the streets.

To: Apollo257@NASA.gov
From: ZeroGravity16@NASA.gov
Subject: Re: Extremely Urgent

Another red flag: Ock isn't going to get much resistance from the webslinger (I'm going by the preview that I caught before "13 Going on 30" this weekend), as Peter Parker hangs up his Spidey suit in order to live an ordinary teen-age life.

If he's not going to fight crime, we might want to distance ourselves from Parker—he also works for the *Daily Planet*, and his editor, J. Jonah Jameson, gives me a Breslin vibe.

P.S.: I forwarded your e-mail to the E.P.A. and Homeland Security.

To: Apollo257@NASA.gov
cc: ZeroGravity16@NASA.gov
From: Wetlands398@EPA.gov
Subject: Re:RE: Extremely Urgent

Sh*t! Is there any possibility that people will look at our cap-and-trade policy as it applies to mercury emissions as a source of Doc Ock's affliction? (I ask this because he is part fish.)

To: Apollo257@NASA.gov
cc: ZeroGravity16@NASA.gov
cc: Wetlands398@EPA.gov
From: Radar402@HomelandSecurity.gov
Subject: Re:RE:RE: Extremely Urgent

We can't have the public think our borders are so porous that someone with mechanical octopus legs is just going to walk into downtown New York and wreak havoc. Thus, I think it's a big mistake to alienate Spider-Man, no matter what publication his alter ego works for. This is a very popular superhero (attached are his worldwide grosses) and still our best hope of defeating Doc Ock.

I also wanted to point out that Clark Kent works for the *Daily Planet;* Peter Parker works for the *Daily Bugle*. The *Planet's* op-ed page has been sympathetic to this Administration, which raises another question: Is "Smallville" still on the WB?

To: Radar402@HomelandSecurity.gov
cc: ZeroGravity16@NASA.gov
cc: Wetlands398@EPA.gov
From: Apollo257@NASA.gov
Subject: Re:RE:RE:RE: Extremely Urgent

"Smallville" is in its third season, and Warner Bros. also has a "Superman" movie in the pipeline. We should get a man on this right away. If we had better interoffice communication, we'd know about these things before the movies got into post-production. And, since ZeroGravity16 mentions it, what about "13 Going on 30"? Will people understand that even though Jennifer Garner plays C.I.A. agent Sydney Bristow on "Alias" and in the movie is a thirteen-year-old who, when sprinkled with pixie dust, instantly becomes thirty, our C.I.A. is not run by children who magically grew up overnight? There's enough heat on George Tenet right now as it is.

To: Apollo257@NASA.gov
cc: ZeroGravity16@NASA.gov
cc: Radar402@HomelandSecurity.gov
From: Wetlands398@EPA.gov
Subject: !!!

How does this pixie dust work? (And is it high in PCBs?) I looked it up: George Tenet is fifty-one. Does that make him really thirty-four? Or does it go up incrementally as you get older?

P.S.: I finally changed the subject line—it was driving me nuts! :-)

To: Wetlands398@EPA.gov
cc: Apollo257@NASA.gov
cc: ZeroGravity16@NASA.gov
cc: JackBristow@alias.abc.com
From: Radar402@HomelandSecurity.gov
Subject: Re: !!!

I'm pretty sure Tenet is actually fifty-one. However, whether he is or isn't a younger man in an older man's body, we can't have this be the PERCEPTION out there in the country. (Note that I've cc'ed Agent Jack Bristow from "Alias.") We have to assume they've looked into this and have shaken the appropriate trees.

What do we need to know about "Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban"?

To: Radar402@HomelandSecurity.gov
cc: Apollo257@NASA.gov
cc: Wetlands398@EPA.gov
cc: JackBristow@alias.abc.com
From: ZeroGravity16@NASA.gov
Subject: Re:RE: !!!

Potter's a Brit. That's Blair's headache. ♦

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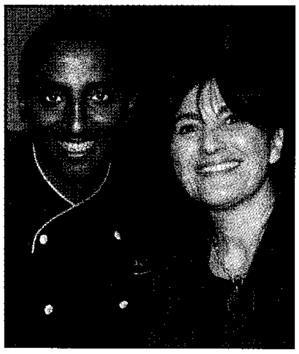
Marcus Samuelsson and Ruth Reichl

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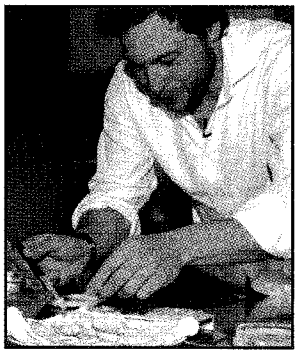
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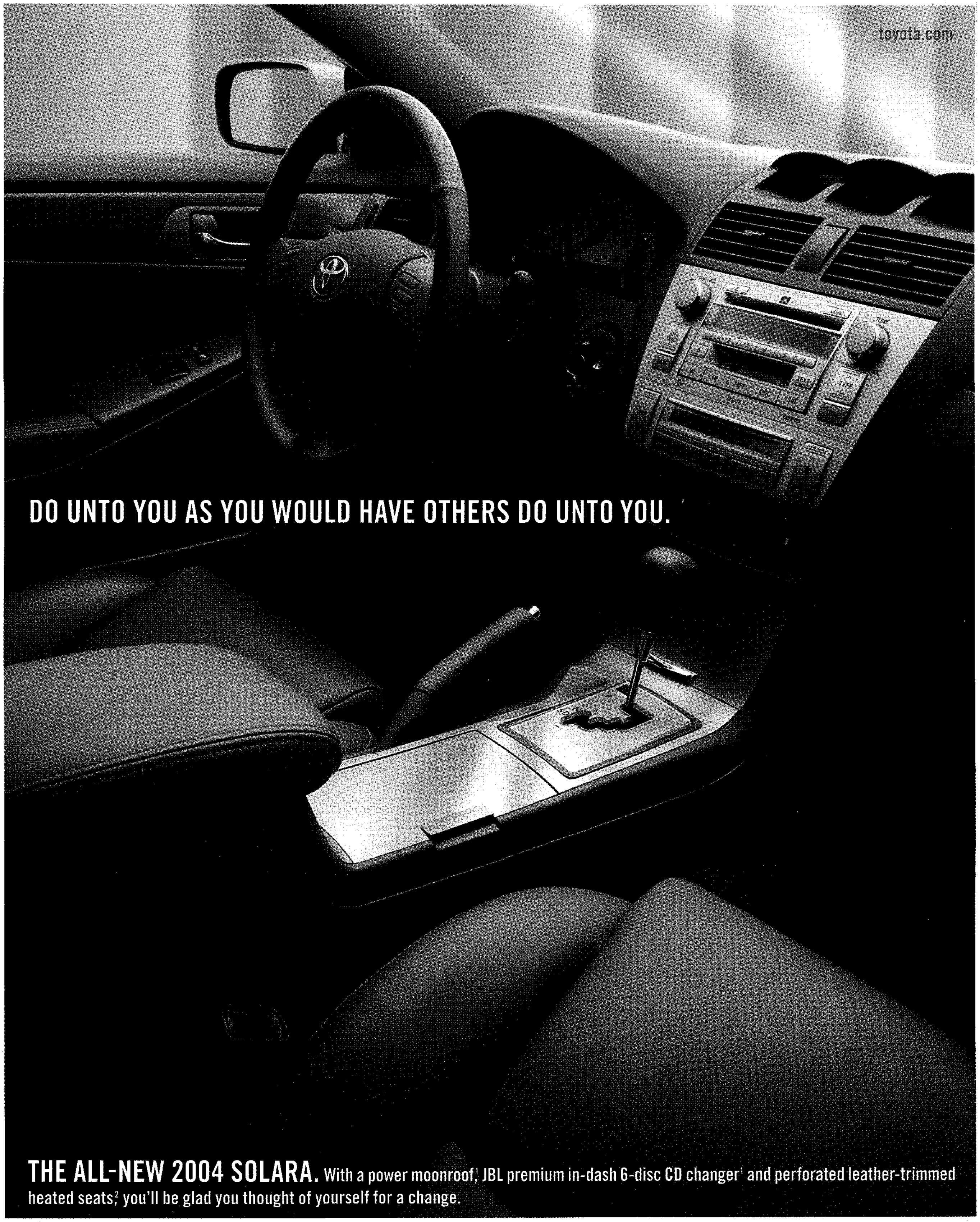
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